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"Dark Necessity" and "Impalpable Now": A Study of the Relationship between the Past and the Present in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Writings

by

Ⓒ BOB MALLETT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

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THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY CERTIFY that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled:-

"Dark Necessity" and "Impalpable Now": A Study of the Relationship between the Past and the Present in Nathaniel Hawthorne's Writings

submitted by BOB MALLETT in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in American Literature.

John Lauber
Supervisor

Morton L Ross

William B Sampson

DATED: the 27th day of October, 1977.

TO KAREN

My editor and best friend.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to examine the relationship between the past and the present in Hawthorne's major writings including both short stories and novels, and thereby to establish that the fates of some Hawthornian characters are determined by their awareness of past and present events.

In such an analysis three groups of characters emerge. They are: first, those who are principally concerned with the present, while they acknowledge the influence of the past. These characters are usually those who illustrate the Hawthornian virtues of peacefulness, contentment and, sometimes, happiness.

The second group are those who neglect the past's necessary place in their lives. These characters, who are principally female, focus almost exclusively on the present with the result that they are sometimes victimized. At best they fail to learn from their past experience, so that they remain, in a sense, incomplete.

The third and largest group consists of those characters who are too concerned with the past. They comprise the majority of characters examined here, and in this essay are divided into two sub-groups. The first sub-group is the more easily identifiable of the two: it is made up of those characters who

dedicate themselves to a fixed project, and who refuse to modify those projects in accordance with subsequent experience. Characters in the other sub-group become past-burdened through various means: through a sense of guilt, through unsuccessful attempts to deny the past, through jealousy, through fascination with their familial past, and through the oppressive sense of past injustice. The fates of characters who remain preoccupied with the past are strikingly similar: they destroy their own personalities or, more usually, cause their own death or cause the death of another character with whom they are closely associated.

The existence of these three groups helps to define for the reader Hawthorne's concept of reality. For him reality consists of both the ongoing 'now', in which all possible development and improvement takes place, and the experience of the past. Because he viewed the world in this way, he could not join with some other men of letters, like Emerson and Whitman, who rejected the European past and thought of America as a new beginning for man. Hawthorne felt that the past could not, and should not, be denied, while at the same time he recognized that the present must be man's paramount concern.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"My life glided on, the past appearing to mingle with the present and absorb the future till the whole lies before me at a glance."[1] This kind of existence led by the central character in "The Village Uncle" is markedly more peaceful and contented than that of better developed Hawthornian characters like Ethan Brand ("Ethan Brand") or Roger Chillingworth (The Scarlet Letter), and not nearly as tragic as Beatrice's ("Rappaccini's Daughter") or Georgiana's ("The Birthmark"). In the lives of the past four characters the past does not "mingle" very well with the present, especially in the cases of Brand and Chillingworth where their past experience actually impairs their present existence. This paper shows, by analyzing the relationship between the past and the present in various characters' experience, that their fates can be accounted for. Specifically, it shows that three groups of characters exist, each with its own temporal orientation that typifies the fate of the characters within it.

The first group consists of a small number of minor characters who are peaceful, contented or happy. In this group are: the village uncle, the tollgatherer ("The Tollgatherer's Day"), Adam and Eve ("The New Adam and Eve"), Robin Molineux ("My Kinsman, Major Molineux"), and briefly, Rosina ("Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent"). They are all primarily concerned with the present while at the same time acknowledging the lessons of the past. This ideal is succinctly stated by the narrator of "Old News": "In this world we are things of a moment, and are made to pursue momentary things, with here and there a thought that stretches mistily towards eternity, and perhaps may endure as long. All philosophy that would abstract man from the present is no more than words".[2] The evanescent present should be man's primary concern, although he may not ignore the lessons of the past--even old newspapers are collected by posterity "to be treasured up among the best materials of its wisdom".[3] Among these lessons is the fact, stated by the narrator of The House of the Seven Gables, that "the act of the passing generation is the germ which may and must produce good or evil fruit in a far-distant time; that together with the seed of the merely temporary crop, which mortals term expediency, they inevitably sow the acorns of a more enduring growth, which may darkly overshadow their posterity".[4] These shadows are unpleasant for some Hawthornian characters who do not give both the past and the present their due importance.

One reason that these present-oriented, yet past-enlightened characters have not interested Hawthorne's critics very much is that they are almost all minor. Hawthorne provides a few major characters whose lives are consistently unencumbered by an oppressive sense of the past, perhaps because they do not provide sufficient dramatic interest. Contented characters like the toll-gatherer are not easily developed psychologically, as Hawthorne liked to do; nor are his untroubled lovers, because they remain essentially undeveloped and therefore static.

Whatever his reason for not using a greater number of positive characters, Hawthorne usually concerns himself with two other kinds of characters who make up my second and third groups. The second group consists of characters who ignore the past too much. The third, and by far the largest, contains those who become compulsively preoccupied with their pasts.

Superficially, one of the most interesting features of the second group is that it consists mainly of female characters. Typically, they belong to this group because, in their love for a male character, they either deliberately overlook or forget certain previous events. For example, Georgiana ("The Birthmark") ignores her husband's record as a scientist, and Beatrice ("Rappaccini's Daughter") ignores her own past, in their loves for, respectively, Aylmer and Giovanni. Priscilla makes one statement that typifies the position of all the characters in this group: she says that "the past never comes back again."[5] However, not all characters included in this group fall into this sub-category of loving females. Some of them are unique in their present-orientation: Kenyon (The Marble Faun) is the only character who retreats from a proper orientation to a present-only stance; Hilda (also The Marble Faun) attempts to remain aloof from the sinful world; Pearl refuses to acknowledge the rule of law; and even Phoebe (The House of the Seven Gables) dismisses the ancient Pyncheon curse too lightly. Each of these characters have forgotten the Hawthornian truth, stated by Johannes Kjørven, that "Man carries his past on his back and continues an indefinite past in the living present."[6] To ignore the past completely means to reject the lessons it can teach and the warnings it can offer, so that characters who do ignore it sometimes become the victims of past-burdened characters.

The third group, the most important one, consists principally of those tortured souls who are obsessed by some event or decision in their past lives for which they may or may not feel guilt. Included here are Hester (The Scarlet Letter), Zenobia (The Blithedale Romance), Miriam (The Marble Faun), Dimmesdale (The Scarlet Letter), Reuben Bourne ("Roger Malvin's Burial"), Roderick Elliston ("Egotism: or, the Bosom Serpent"), Holgrave, Hepzibah and Clifford (all of The House of the Seven Gables) as well as Hawthorne's nine 'projectors'. Donatello (The Marble Faun) is also included here because, for most of the novel, he is burdened by his guilt for the death of Miriam's model. But whatever the case, the obsession causes the character's present activity to become dominated by one past event or decision causing the normal relationship between past and present in their lives to be disrupted.

Why Hawthorne would associate dissatisfied or evil characters with their attitudes to the past is suggested by his biography. Much critical ink has been spilled on the subject of his concern with his personal past, with his ancestors (together with their religion), and with his country's history. Hawthorne was nagged by a sense of guilt for the actions of some of his ancestors, as he admits in "The Custom House" sketch where he says he is his ancestors' "representative [who must] hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes."[7] The extent of his interest has been noted by Fossum. He recognizes that both the more psychological tales (like "Roger Malvin's Burial"), and the overtly historical ones (like "The Legends of the Province House"), "deal with history, the former kind emphasizing personal history against a backdrop of America's cultural past, the latter kind dramatizing cultural history through encounters of individuals with their personal past."[8]

Whatever the nature of his interest at any given time, whether it concerned the personal, cultural or universal [Fossum's term][9] past, Hawthorne's interest in the past lasted throughout his writing life. From the earlier works, which are seemingly a retelling of colonial history, to The Marble Faun, which deals in part with characters' personal pasts, he frequently creates characters whose pasts inordinately influence their present lives.

He was not, however, too interested in examining the past for its own sake. The criterion for Hawthorne's interest in the past seems largely to have been whether or not it had relevance for the present. "Hawthorne's continuous effort to recapture the history of mankind...would appear to be basically an attempt to discover the moral self in terms of belongingness and continuity with that which had gone before."[10] As he said himself, he disliked "the shadowy outlines of departed men and women"[11] provided by conventional history books. So he strove, in "The Whole History of Grandfather's Chair" to make historical characters "assume the hues of life"[12] so that children of his day would enjoy and benefit from American history. Again, in "The Old Manse" essay, his reminiscences centre around an old building, which has special meaning for him because he is its present inhabitant. Even his "Biographical Sketches" of historical characters are told to an audience of children for whom they provide moral lessons on a variety of topics.

The episode, told in "The Old Manse," of the boy who kills a wounded British soldier, ie emblematic of his interest. While the battlefield he describes is the actual site of the Battle of Concord, Hawthorne is not as interested in the conflict itself as he is in this tale of boy and soldier.

He contrasts his impression of the battlefield to that of the usual visitor by claiming that "I have never found my imagination much excited by this or any other scene of historic celebrity."[13] "More interesting"[14] to him is this story, which has "borne more fruit for me than all that history has to tell us of the fight;"[15] the important aspect of the historical record for him is the material that can be applied to the present, as he says this story can. "Oftentimes, as an intellectual and moral exercise, I have sought to follow that poor youth through his subsequent career, and observe how his soul was tortured by the blood stain."[16] The boy who commits a murder in the heat of the moment is more interesting to Hawthorne than the entire Battle of Concord because he is fascinated by the influence that the act of murder will have throughout the boy's subsequent life.

This situation, in which the past becomes dominant in a character's experience, is one recreated by Hawthorne many times. He uses it in tales as dissimilar as "Roger Malvin's Burial" and "Rappaccini's Daughter" because it suits his psychological approach. In writing, Hawthorne takes "facts which relate to myself" and burrows "into the depths of our common nature, for the purposes of psychological romance."[17] For these purposes, characters who become obsessed by the past offer him a wide range of creative possibilities.

In Hawthorne's writings, characters who are past-burdened do not usually suffer from a merely vague sense of the past. Their situation more often derives from a specific event, action or decision. These do not necessarily need to be included within the story itself, but may be placed antecedent to the action. Beatrice's death in "Rappaccini's Daughter" is the eventual result of her father's past decision to guard her from the world's evil by making her deadly to others. In a similar manner, the death of Richard Digby ("The Man of Adamant") results from his decision, made some time before the story begins, that his interpretation of the Bible is the only true one. In other stories, however, Hawthorne does include the crucial incident. Reuben Bourne's troubles begin with his departure from Malvin, and Aylmer's from the time he becomes preoccupied with the idea of removing his wife's birthmark.

From then on, such characters' lives develop as if they were determined by this one aspect of their pasts. Their one "fundamental problem"[18] consists of their "relations to the past." When they become obsessed with some occurrence in their past lives, they fail to pay proper attention to the demands made by their present lives. They may be sinful and guilty, prideful, imbalanced in some way, or slavishly committed to an ideal or project, but they all suffer from an oppressive sense of the past. As John Shea puts it, they suffer from "the consequences of a wilful decision or act, which has moral as well as personal consequences for the character or characters who make it."[19]

All three positions taken by the characters in these groups are exemplified in a short historical sketch entitled "Old Esther Dudley," although the proper orientation is not represented in a human character. In this tale, the evolving history of the United States is presented as a whole that includes both past and present. The proper relationship between past and present--in which the past is neither dominant or denied--is contrasted to the limited vision of the characters. The old woman, Esther Dudley, is a Loyalist (and therefore a representative of the past in post-revolutionary America) who rejects the country's new republicanism as she misguidedly awaits the return of a British governor. She lives "continually in her own circle of ideas...never regulating her mind by a proper reference to present things."[20] Hancock, at the other extreme, pauses only to "reverence for the last time the stately and gorgeous prejudices of the tottering past"[21] before entering the Province House with his republican friends. His message to his associates who accompany him into the mansion is to forget the past: "...onward - onward! We are no longer children of the Past!"[22]

Although to this point in the story Hawthorne seems to be advocating the rejection of the past, he now shows that Hancock's exclusively present-oriented vision is incomplete by introducing a symbol of evolving American culture, the bell in the "clock of the Old South", the sound of which establishes in its old, yet repeated, peal, the proper relationship between the past and the present in which the present dominates, but in which the past is not forgotten. While it is true that the ancient clock sounds the eclipse of the past, its ringing reminds both the reader and the narrator of past events because it has tolled the hour during so many previous years: "And now, again, the clock of the Old South threw its voice of ages in the breeze, knolling the hourly knell of the Past...what a volume of history had been told off into hours by the same voice that was not trembling in the air."[23] The bell therefore can be understood as a symbol of developing American culture, not just as a reminder of the supremacy of the present moment. By announcing the passing hour, it announces the evolution of the American tradition.

The sound of the bell also reminds the narrator that, like Dudley and Hancock before him, he is not separate from the continuing development of his country's history. Although he half expects "the hoop-coated phantom of Esther Dudley [to enter and admonish them to] leave the historic precincts to herself and her kindred shades",[24] she does not. There is no reason for her to do so, because the narrator belongs in the Province House as the successor to herself and Hancock. The narrator is distinct from the other two only in that he represents the present--the most recent moment in American history--just as Hancock once did before him, and Dudley before him. Interestingly, Hawthorne's narrator, on discovering that Esther Dudley's shade will not appear, "retired unbidden"[25] from the Province House and indicates that he is not likely to return soon. He apparently had not foreseen that hearing the story of Dudley and Hancock would remind him uncomfortably that his own experience is an outgrowth of theirs.

Bells like the "Old South" are symbols used by Hawthorne to clarify the nature of the relationship between past and present events. The total meaning expressed by the bell image evolves as the bell 'encounters' new events. In the course of "Old Esther Dudley", the meaning embodied in the Old South first expands to include Hancock's awareness and then that of the narrator, while the bell in "A Rill from the Town Pump" eventually incorporates within itself such diverse experience as that of the long dead Indian sagamore and that of the present town drunk. This characteristic of bells helps to establish that for Hawthorne each passing moment in his characters' experience represents the evolution of their total experience; as well, it reveals why they, and other objects, make convenient narrators or focal points in some of his historical sketches.[26] They remind both the reader and Hawthorne's characters that the present contains their personal and cultural past, and that they cannot ignore the past because it shapes what they are and what they will be.

In this context, Gretchen Graf Jordan, in her study of the bell in "The Bell's Biography", makes a statement that also helps to establish the relationship between past and present. She says that the bell image has a "capacity to express several different cultural 'gestalts' [and in so doing] expresses the essential continuity of Western civilization."[27] Bells represent this kind of continuity because they symbolically incorporate both the events (hence 'gestalts') of the present and those events that have occurred during the many previous years in which they have tolled. So the bell symbol enables Hawthorne to portray his idea of the evolutionary process of history in which present events develop from past events, and of the proper orientation for his characters, in which the past cannot be ignored, despite the attempts by some of them to do so.

In addition, it should be noted here that Hawthorne's foundations can sometimes be considered to be symbolic of the proper relationship between his characters' past and present experience because they too contain both past and present at the same time: "How strange is the life of a fountain! - born at every moment, yet of an age coeval with the rocks."[28]

Hawthorne sometimes specifically establishes the difference between properly oriented and past-burdened characters by using organic images. Characters who are appropriately aware of both the past and the present he sometimes describes as having healthy, natural growth, while those who are dominated by the past are often described as having diseased, unnaturally restricted growth. For example, he presents the village uncle as a character in whom "the verdure and the flowers are not frostbitten in the midst of winter."[29] But he describes Reuben Bourne and Rappaccini as being respectively "blighted" and "emaciated" in their intemperate dedication to their fixed goals. Therefore, in different places in the following chapters, I point out this organic imagery in order to support my identification of some characters' orientations.

To this point I have stated that the intent of this paper is to prove that the fates of different characters vary according to their awareness of past and present events. I have also identified the three groups to be examined, together with three kinds of images that Hawthorne sometimes uses to identify two of them. Before continuing with the argument, I will pause here to explain how this essay relates to previous Hawthorne criticism.

Four critics have done extensive work that is directly related to mine. Since I deal with the relationship between the past and the present, it is logical that all four of them should deal in some way with Hawthorne's concept of time. First, John Shea shows, in The Use of Consequences in Hawthorne's Fiction, that in much of Hawthorne's work the past is connected to the present by means of the decisions his characters make and by the consequences of those decisions. Second, Johannes Kjørven recognizes that for Hawthorne the past is never left behind: "Man carries his past on his back and continues an indefinite past in the living present."[30] Third is the work of Robert Fossum, who has identified the task of Hawthorne's characters to be that of "recalling the past, reconstructing it, and integrating it with their present existence."[31] In Hawthorne's Inviolable Circle: the Problem of Time, he says that Hawthorne not only warns his reader "against ignoring history but [also] of the dangers involved in remaining too long...within its depths,"[32] which is a similar statement to my contention that, for Hawthorne's characters, the past must inform the ongoing present without dominating it. Fourth is R.W.B. Lewis, whose book The American Adam attacks the problem of the past's place in New England literature between 1820 and 1860. Although the present essay was largely written before I encountered Lewis's work, its discussions of the doctrine of the fortunate fall and of the place of the adamic myth in American literature help to provide my study with a context. It also interprets Hawthorne's concept of the present in a similar way that this essay does: as a constantly occurring moment that dissolves as soon as it is formed.[33] The phrase that Lewis frequently employs is the "living moment", while I occasionally refer to the 'eternal now'. Most other critics have proved only marginally useful because they confine their remarks to non-temporal terms.

In order to place my terms 'past-burdened' and 'present-oriented' in the proper perspective, it is important to note here that this essay does not propose that Hawthorne's chief interest lay in dramatizing proper or improper relationships between the past and the present, or that diverse terms like sin, guilt, imbalance, isolation and pride can simply be replaced by the temporal ones offered here. Rather, it states that, by using temporal terms, similarities among some characters can be established that have not been previously identified.

The bulk of this essay consists of a close examination of each of these three groups in turn. Since such a disproportionate number of major characters are burdened by the past in some manner, the major emphasis of this paper will be on them. However, before dealing with them, characters in the other two groups will be considered in order that, first, a standard of appropriate behavior for contented characters can be established, and second, that the reader will have examples of contrasting behavior in order to better judge the past-burdened characters, who form the core of my argument. The last group will be presented in two chapters because nine characters, who are identified as 'projectors', constitute a natural sub-group within the larger one. In all, thirty-two major and minor characters will be considered.

NOTES

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, Twice Told Tales, p. 245. Subsequently referred to as Anderson.

[2] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Complete Writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, III, 185. Subsequently referred to by volume and page number.

[3] III, 184.

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p. 12. Subsequently referred to as H.S.G.

[5] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance, p. 76. Subsequently referred to as B.R.

[6] Johannes Kjørven, "Hawthorne and the Significance of History", American Norvegica, II, 202. Subsequently referred to as Kjørven.

[7] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 8. Subsequently referred to as S.L.

[8] Robert H. Fossum, Hawthorne's Invidable Circle: The Problem of Time, p. 2. Subsequently referred to as Fossum.

[9] Fossum's term.

[10] Kjørven, p. 122

[11] XII.

[12] XII, xxiii.

[13] Hyatt H. Waggoner - Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Tales and Sketches, Toronto, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 379.

[14] Waggoner, p. 378

[15] Waggoner, p. 379

[16] Waggoner, p. 379

[17] Waggoner, p. 407-8

[18] Fossum, p. 2

[19] John Andrew Shea, "The Use of Consequences in Hawthorne's Fiction", p. i.

[20] Anderson, p. 228

[21 - 23] Anderson, p. 232

[24] Anderson, p. 232-3

[25] Anderson, p. 232

[26] Among these are: "Main Street", "A Bell's Biography", "The Great Stone Face", "Old Ticonderoga", Grandfather's Chair, "A Rill from the Town Pump", "Sunday at Home", "The Old Manse", and "The Antique Ring".

[27] Gretchen Graf Jordan, "Hawthorne's 'Bell': Historical Evolution through Symbol", Nineteenth Century Fiction, 19-20 (1964-66), 132

[28] Waggoner, p. 200

[29] Anderson, p. 247

[30] Kjørven, p. 129

[31] Fossum, p. 2

[32] Fossum, p. 42

[33] Lewis, p. 18

CHAPTER II

PROPERLY ORIENTED AND PRESENT-ORIENTED CHARACTERS

Because Hawthorne was not too interested in characters who are happy and contented, and only slightly more interested in characters who are naive or who ignore the evil in the world, most of the characters presented in this chapter are minor.

The first group to be considered consists of characters who are properly oriented. Most of these figures are static and are used simply to present a particular position that Hawthorne wished to illustrate. As such, the tollgatherer, the village uncle and others like them will not occupy much space here, although they do represent in Hawthorne's writing an attitude that corresponds to contentment and happiness.

The second group contains characters that often serve Hawthorne as the hapless victims of his more demonic, past-oriented characters. Characters in this group are all too exclusively concerned with the present, and not enough with the past. Although some of them are as two-dimensional as those in the first group, this group does include some that are slightly more complex. Therefore, greater consideration will be given to characters like Hilda, Pearl and Phoebe. However, this second group also fades in importance when compared to the third group of past-burdened characters, and is useful in this study principally because characters in it are usually closely associated with past-oriented characters to whom they contrast.

Their minor position in Hawthorne's work and in my argument here dictates that both of these groups will be dealt with in this chapter. The smaller of the two, consisting of properly-oriented characters, will be considered first.

One minor character from "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent", Rosina, is worth mentioning here for two reasons. First, she is the agency of redemption for her past-oriented husband, Roderick, and second, she provides a concise statement of the proper place of the past in relation to the present. Her appearance in the garden enables Roderick to forget his jealousy by realizing that she represents "hope and unselfish love".[1] By returning, she has indicated that she has forgiven him for having estranged himself from her, a fact that is later corroborated in her statement that "The past, dismal as it seems, shall fling no gloom upon the future. To give it its due importance we must think of it but as an anecdote in our Eternity".[2] According to this statement, the past is not to be forgotten, but is to be relegated to its proper place in experience where it informs, but does not dominate, later events. It is a statement that characters in the second group fail to heed.

Unlike "Egotism", which has an identifiable plot, "The Village Uncle" consists merely of a series of rambling recollections by an old man sitting beside his fireside. Yet in his attitude toward the past and the present, Hawthorne identifies the nature of peaceful, contented existence as he understood it. For the village uncle, the past, which is "peeping over the shoulders of the present",[3] consists of both pleasant and unpleasant memories, which are nonetheless ones that he can muse over without becoming preoccupied by any of them. He feels that, because he is the village patriarch, the "spinner of long yarns",[4] to whom the children of the town listen, he "widens the circle of [his] sympathies" and "joins all the youthful to [his] household, in the kindred of affection."[5] By telling stories of the past, he not only entertains the children, but also as he says, gives "utterance to much wisdom."[6]

By means of his voice, the past instructs the present, while remaining no more than an enjoyable story. The storyteller himself does not forget that his stories are mere anecdotes in the continuing flow of life, and like Rosina of "Egotism", does not allow them to assume more importance in his life than they should: they remain "the slight tissue of a dream [that] can no more preserve us from the stern reality of misfortune than a robe of cobweb could repel the wintry blast".[7] So the past informs his present and that of his listeners, without dominating their awareness or distracting it from present "reality".

Like the village uncle, the tollgatherer does not become absorbed in any intense reflections. In this he contrasts to the contemplative minister who crosses his tollbridge in a "mist of brooding thought".[8] Unlike him, in the course of performing his duties, the tollgatherer responds to each successive traveller, his reflections sliding from those who have already passed to those who are presently passing. For example, at one point in the tale, the appearance of a pair of happy newlyweds causes him to ponder their joy, but these thoughts change with the arrival of a man and his sickly wife, an event that temporarily "throws a melancholy shadow over the spirit of the observing man".[9] Even this does not preoccupy the tollgatherer, however, which is indicated by the fact that Hawthorne quickly moves the tale forward by using the phrase "and now",[10] a connective he uses twelve times to indicate the various shifts in the tollgatherer's changing focus. Another indication of the tollgatherer's concern with present events is his refusal to let a schooner, which interrupts tollbridge traffic, bother him. He realizes that all seeming interruptions in the flow of life are temporary and are to be regarded lightly. Worrying about something that has already occurred is wasted effort, so he remains unruffled by accidents like this one. By the end of the day, its events--"all the dusty pilgrimage which he has witnessed"[11]--are for him reduced to "a flitting show of phantoms for his thoughtful soul to muse upon".[12]

Josiah and Miriam of "The Canterbury Pilgrims" are also happy and present-oriented. They leave their restrictive Shaker community because of Father Job's lack of charity toward those who, like themselves, have fallen in love. The Shaker community is intolerant of what Father Job calls "iniquities of the flesh"[13] which includes falling in love as they have done. By leaving the settlement, they reject the oppressive authority of the past and assert their own thoughtful ability to live their own lives.

As well as being contrasted to the rigid Shaker leader and his followers, the young couple are contrasted to the travellers they meet, who attempt to convince them to return to the village and forsake their love for one another. In rejecting the travellers' arguments, Josiah correctly recognizes that there is a similarity in all their statements, although he cannot identify what it is. In fact, what he has discovered is that the travellers all wish to escape from their painful awareness of past failures. These failures have defeated them to the extent that they have renounced their place in the world and seek to escape from it in the communal society, where they will no longer be expected to endure "mortal hope and fear".[14] They are, in short, trying to substitute the fixity of established Shaker dogma for the struggle against misfortune that they are now enduring.

Josiah and Miriam do the opposite. They leave the settlement so that they can direct the course of their lives without the past interfering so much. They set off looking forward to what is to come--not denying the past, but not allowing it to dominate their lives as it had in the settlement: "the lovers drank at the Shaker spring, and then, with chastened hopes, but more confiding affections, went on to mingle in an untried life."[15]

The last two characters who consistently exhibit happiness are Adam and Eve ("The New Adam and Eve"). These two characters are able to place the past in its proper perspective, which is not to say that they forget it. Rather, their first thoughts concern the past: "Their first consciousness is of calm and mutual enjoyment, which seems not to have been the birth of that very moment, but prolonged from a past eternity".[16] However, their "investigation of the past"[17] does not become an obsession with them. Nor does their attention turn to future possibilities, which Hawthorne describes as "the vice of those who have a long past behind them".[18] Their major concern remains with the present, despite their continued interest in the past, which is embodied in their explorations of a city in a recently depopulated Earth.

After each exposure to various remains of civilization, they reaffirm the principal importance of their present existence by reaffirming their feelings for each other. To Adam's query about whether their purpose on Earth can be discovered in the remains of the past civilization, Eve cries that their purpose is "to love one another". That this is in fact the purpose that Hawthorne sees for them the rest of the story makes clear. For example, Eve rescues Adam from the library, that storehouse of the past, where he is becoming engrossed in "the interpretations of the riddles amid which we have been wandering".[19] Eve convinces him to leave, saying that, "It may be better not to seek the interpretation ... If you love me, come away!"[20] In this way, she avoids the second Fall, by asserting the ascendancy of their love over the knowledge of the past. Hawthorne leaves them properly aware of both the past and the present, despite their environment, saying of them that, "having no reminiscence save dim and fleeting visions of a preexistence, [they] are content to live and be happy in the present".[21]

The last character in this group is one whose attainment of adulthood is characterized by his achievement of a proper awareness of the past and the present. Robin, of "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", learns that one must not rely on the past, represented in his case by the father-figure, Major Molineux, in order to give meaning and direction to one's life. The story is a tale of maturation told on two levels--the personal and the historical. On the personal level, Robin must reject the past while remembering his responsibility for previous events in which he was involved. On the historical level, the authority of the old British colonialism must be overthrown and replaced with the power of American self-government.

The story details the process by which Robin is eventually able to assert himself by rejecting his kinsman. Initially Robin leaves behind his own father, but goes in search of Major Molineux, another father-figure on whom he pins his hopes of advancement. His departure from home does not truly signify his passage into manhood because he is merely attempting to shift his dependency on one father to a surrogate. Specifically, when he reaches the village his first action is to look for his kinsman. But after being repeatedly rebuffed by the settlers, he becomes puzzled, for he knows that the Major is a person of authority and should on this account be well-known. What he doesn't realize is that the townspeople are preparing to cast his relative from his position of honour by disgracing him publicly. As Robin waits for the Major to pass by, he is so disturbed by his failure to find him that the street scene in front of him keeps dissolving into scenes of his remembered home.

This ambiguity in Robin's perceptions represents the uncertainty of the transitional state between youth and adulthood, on both the personal and the historical levels. Robin's situation is ambiguous because he exists between his childish dependency on the major and the independence that accompanies his rejection of him. For America, the ambiguity lies in the difference between its existence as a colony and as a sovereign state.

In both cases, the past--youth and colonial status--must be left behind. Robin must become master of his own fate by assuming responsibility for himself, while America must become self-governing. Hence, in Robin's laughter and in the mob's actions, the past is rejected because it has become burdensome and because it has been outgrown.

However, progress is not simply a positive development. The leader of the mob is a devil-figure, and the crowd is criticized by Hawthorne for callously "trampling all on an old man's heart".[22] The crowd passes on, heedless of the pain they are inflicting as they blithely revel in the overthrow of established authority, but their actions are "counterfeit", "senseless", and "frenzied".[23] As necessary as the rejection of the past may be, the responsibility for rejecting it must be accepted and remembered. Therefore Robin remains behind, shaken by his awareness of what has happened, and regretting that he took part in his relative's degradation.

And therefore American must not forget its responsibility for having revolted and for having assumed the duties of self-government. Neither Robin nor America can return to the other side of the river, and both must carry the past--in the form of responsibility for previous actions--into the present.

In all of these characters who are contented and sometimes even happy, the past is neither denied nor dominant. All of them maintain a primary interest in the present and focus their attention on it, although not exclusively. This correspondence of their fate with their proper orientation establishes these minor figures as a significant group. Later, a number of other characters will be discussed who recover an appropriate awareness of past and present, and once they do, they too manifest signs of the same peace and contentment, despite having previously been preoccupied with the past. Now, however, the second group of characters will be dealt with who are all too concerned with the present.

A total of eight characters exhibit this present-only orientation. One of them, however, will be discussed at the beginning of the next chapter because he exhibits more than one orientation. Donatello is past-oriented for a longer time than he is present-oriented. During the course of _The Marble Faun_ he is in turn too present-oriented, then burdened by the past, and then properly aware of both past and present. Of the remaining seven who will be dealt with in this chapter, only two--Phoebe (_The House of the Seven Gables_) and Pearl (_The Scarlet Letter_) achieve a proper awareness. The final position of the rest consists of an excessive concern with the present at the expense of the past. Georgiana ("The Birthmark") and Beatrice ("Rappaccini's Daughter") remain consistently unencumbered by thoughts of the past, as does Priscilla (The Blithedale Romance), while Hilda (The Marble Faun) has the opportunity to recognize the importance of the past but rejects it. Kenyon (also The Marble Faun) is the only character to become too concerned with the present after having been appropriately oriented; as a result, he shall be considered first because he provides a clear contrast between the characters of the first group, who have just been discussed, and this second group.

Of the characters who are transformed in The Marble Faun, Kenyon's transformation is the most unfortunate. While it is true that Donatello's fate is ironic, it is not finally tragic, because he gains more than he loses. But Kenyon loses his sense of the past's place in his life by denying the educative value of sin. Throughout most of the novel, Kenyon is able to appreciate the past represented by Roman history and art while at the same time remaining involved in the events of the present. For example, while he reflects quietly on various aspects of history, he also offers advice to Miriam and to Donatello, and even plans a way to reunite them. His downfall occurs when he attempts to win Hilda's love by telling her that he really does not believe that sin has been a positive influence in Donatello's life--despite his own suspicion that it has helped to improve him.

In the beginning of the novel, Kenyon is aware that both the past and the present form a coherent unity which is fundamental to art, at least to sculpture. When Miriam claims that the world would be better off without the burden of the past, to which she feels sculpture contributes, he replies that "Sculpture, and the delight which men naturally take in it, appear to me a proof that it is good to work with all time before view."[24] Seeing a fallen pillar in Trajan's Forum, for instance, reminds him both of the past and of the present, whereas the pillar causes the present-oriented Hilda to wonder only about immortality, and Miriam to wonder if the past ever fades from memory. Kenyon states that the pillar provides at once a record of Trajan's past victories and a record to be used on judgment day to assess the emperor's worthiness.

During the "moonlight ramble", Kenyon not only sees the Coliseum as it presently stands, a dark ruin, but also imagines it as it must have been during an ancient gladiatorial contest. His comments have the effects of making the past seem to be a part of the group's present experience, just as they later do in the Church of the Capuchins when he, Miriam and Donatello view the body of the dead monk. Kenyon's first sight of the body provokes his question about the monk's history. Like the ruin of the Coliseum, the body is not only a phenomenon of the present for him, but it is also, in an abstract sense, a cause for past-oriented musings.

Kenyon's perception of Donatello's problems, and the advice he offers to his troubled friend, reflect his awareness of the correct temporal orientation. During the deepest period of Donatello's obsession with his past, Kenyon tells him that "'It is absurdly monstrous, my dear friend, thus to fling the dead weight of our mortality upon our immortal hopes. While we live on earth, 'tis true, we must needs carry our skeletons about with us; but, for Heaven's sake, do not let us burden our spirits with them in our feeble efforts to soar upward!'"[25] Although Kenyon is not immediately able to convince Donatello, Kenyon always remains cheerful and able to enjoy the picturesque Appenine scenery. He realizes that rigid plans of action seldom yield the desired results (a truth that most of Hawthorne's projectors do not realize): "Chance and change love to deal with men's settled plans, not with their idle vagaries".[26] So the plan he evolves for helping Donatello out of his despondency consists merely of a horseback ramble in the mountains, with only one set goal, that of arriving at a specified time in Perugia.

Although Kenyon eventually loses his proper orientation, he maintains it until after Hilda's mysterious disappearance. It is Kenyon, the "man of marble",[27] to whom Hawthorne refers, after Hilda has vanished, that it is "wonderful that this our narrow foothold of the Present should hold its own so constantly, and, while every moment changing, should still be like a rock betwixt the encountering tides of the long Past and the infinite to Come!"[28] Even though Kenyon berates himself for letting Hilda wander Rome's streets alone, he also comforts himself with the thought that Hilda's purity will safeguard her, and so does not give himself up to futile brooding over her disappearance. In this he is unlike George Herkimer of "Egotism" who is enslaved by his self-oriented thoughts during the period in which he is estranged from his wife.

Prior to Kenyon's rejection of the past, Hawthorne has given the reader two clues to Kenyon's ultimate fate: his reaction to Miriam when she nearly reveals her trouble to him, and his response to her argument about the educative value of sin.

The first occurs early in the novel when Miriam comes to Kenyon's studio and pleads with him to let her disburden herself to him. His response is not the complete sympathy that she had expected. He holds back because he is suspicious of Miriam's past; and so, instead of openly accepting the responsibility of friendship, he remains uncertain whether he wishes to become involved in "the mystery in which Miriam was enveloped."[29]

This tendency to shy away from the past is more clearly revealed later when he meets Donatello and Miriam in the countryside. Miriam and he speculate on the change in Donatello, which both feel is fortunate, and which Kenyon characterizes as a mixture of playful actions and reflective thought. Miriam continues this trend of thought by commenting that Donatello once again has faun-like tendencies. However, Kenyon cannot accept that Donatello's sin is the cause of his beneficial change, or that, because sin has produced positive effects in Donatello, it is a disguised blessing. Nor can he accept the logical conclusion that Donatello's situation leads her to draw: "that very sin--into which Adam precipitated himself and all his race--was it the destined means by which, over a long pathway of toil and sorrow, we are to attain a higher, brighter, and profounder happiness than our lost birthright gave? Will not this idea account for the permitted existence of sin, as no other theory can?"[30] In terms of the story, her conclusion is undeniably correct; Donatello has become fully human precisely because he sins and then is able to integrate that experience with his present life.

Unlike Donatello, Kenyon finds it easier to reject the past than risk the possibility of losing Hilda. Still fascinated by Miriam's statements when he next meets Hilda, he presents them to her as a possible explanation of Donatello's great change. Her reaction is unexpected and violent. She accuses him of nothing less than the destruction of "all religious sentiments"[31] and of the uprooting of "moral law".[32] According to her he has obliterated "whatever precepts of Heaven are written deepest within us."[33] Faced with this reaction from the woman he adores, Kenyon capitulates, hoping to remove the horrified expression on her face by denying that he ever believed his statements. It works; he does win her, but, as Hawthorne suggests, merely because they are both lonely and in need of direction. Therefore it is appropriate that

Hawthorne leaves Kenyon in a pose of supplication--Hilda will become a saint in their home--because he has turned his back on the past by denying the possibility that sin can be beneficial.

Whether Hawthorne intended Kenyon to remain more appealing than Donatello is unclear. On the surface, Kenyon's prospects appear brighter than his. Hawthorne leaves Donatello in prison, and allows Kenyon free to roam the streets and to return to America with Hilda. Yet Donatello is the more heroically transformed of the two, and is the one who finally acts most virtuously. He voluntarily goes to prison, whereas Kenyon solves his moral dilemma by retreating from the position most uncomfortable to him. These contradictions cannot be easily resolved by examining Hawthorne's intentions as revealed in the novel. Clearly the novel centres on Donatello's transformation from being a faun-like creature to being fully human. But Hawthorne seems to have encountered difficulty when he came to analyze the results of that transformation. Specifically, he seems to have come to the unpleasant (for him) realization that his treatment of Donatello implies that sin is educative. This he could not entirely accept, and the ambiguous ending can be seen, therefore, as the result of Hawthorne's failure to determine the value of sin satisfactorily. On the one hand he saw the advantages of considering sin to be a force acting toward virtue, and he portrayed it in the figure of the transformed faun. On the other, he realized that unsettling consequences of this position for religious beliefs like puritanism. In the end, the novel suffers from his inability to clarify his own mind.

However, because Kenyon does not act positively, as Donatello does, and because his relationship with Hilda is merely that of supplicant and saint--not that of lover and lover as is the case with Donatello and Miriam--the reader of The Marble Faun can reasonably conclude that Kenyon is not to be seen simply as a happy character. Rather, he is a neutered figure because he rejects the sinful past that is necessary to complete happiness, and because he submits to Hilda's incomplete view of the world.

The first of the characters in this group to become a victim of a past-oriented character is Georgiana. Aylmer, her husband, falls prey to "the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind",[34] which is the project he formulates to remove her birthmark. It is his obvious dislike of the small mark on her cheek--he calls it "the visible mark of earthly imperfection"[35] --which causes her to suggest its removal. She does this despite being told about Aylmer's dream in which he must cut into her heart in order to remove the birthmark. Her devotion to him extends beyond this disturbing discovery and also beyond her discovery that his previous experiments "were almost invariably failures, if compared to the ideal at which he aimed".[36] She ignores this evidence of his past record, just as she ignores the failure of the experiments with which he tries to entertain her. Instead, she continues to worship him, relying totally on his "honourable love."[37]

Although Hawthorne does not suggest that this quality of loving trust is a fault, she is ultimately destroyed in part because she refuses to consider the evidence of the past. Her love for Aylmer is different from that of Adam and Eve, who seem to learn from their encounters with the past; Georgiana does not develop because she fails to apply the knowledge she has of the past to her present situation. And it is this deliberate denial of the past that contributes directly to her death.

Beatrice is another victim. Like Georgiana she eventually dies because she refuses to acknowledge the evidence of the past. But Beatrice differs from Georgiana in that, while Georgiana ignores her husband's past, she ignores the reality of her own past.

In her newly found love for Giovanni, she forgets about the poisonous shrub at the centre of the garden that gives her life, and although she does not allow him to touch her, she nonetheless carries on as if she was not poisonous. She fails to tell Giovanni that her father has made her body deadly to other life, and even after he has entered the garden she delays telling him until he too has become poisonous. Her motives are not, however, base or evil; the worst that can be said of her refusal to tell Giovanni is that she is weak and naive. All that she intends to do is to enjoy Giovanni's company for a short while, as she tells him: "I dreamed only to love thee and be with thee a little time, and so let thee pass away, leaving but thine image in my heart."[38] But in order to extend that period, she tells him to forget his past perceptions of her (he had suspected that she was the cause of an insect's and a lizard's death). Instead, she advises him to "Forget whatever you may have fancied in regard to me", and to judge her only by "the words of Beatrice Rappaccini [which] are true from the depths of the heart outward." [39] In short, she asks him to have faith in her.

Of course, her expectations are ill-founded. By ignoring her father's past action and its consequences for her in order to enjoy Giovanni's apparent love, she only ensures her death. Her fate is deplorable not so much because her father has made her poisonous, but because she fails to tell Giovanni about her past. By not telling him, she has inadvertently given him a reason to doubt her spiritual nature and to give her the antidote. Despite the fact that she is as pure as the fountain to which her spirit corresponds, and that she is innocent of evil intention, she cannot escape her responsibility for ignoring the past, and so she dies partly as a result of trying to do so.

A fourth character who is too concerned with the present and who ignores the past is Priscilla (The Blithedale Romance), for whom the butterfly is an apt image. She is like a butterfly, caught up in the immediacy of a summer day, ignoring the darkness of yesterday. As Coverdale describes her, she is "like a butterfly, at play in a flickering bit of sunshine, and mistaking it for a broad and eternal summer." [40] She thinks only of her immediate gratification, so when Coverdale asks her if she thinks the world is always a gay place, she replies that she doesn't think about the possibility. It is true that when he asks her if she has any unpleasant memories, she becomes pensive, perhaps remembering her father, Old Moodie, whom she has left behind. But the shadow is only momentary. She soon recovers and replies that, "You made me sad, for a minute, by talking about the past. But the past never comes back again. Do we dream the same dream twice? There is nothing else that I am afraid of." [41] No other statement by her reveals her essential nature as well. She has forgotten the past, because she wants to forget it.

She has forgotten her father, who had held her in his arms and had told her stories of Zenobia. Old Moodie recognizes that she could not be as happy as she is if she hadn't forgotten both him and the sad times they had together. The truth is that Priscilla is so busy enjoying herself that she has only had two reflective moments since she came to Blithedale.

She makes no decisions for herself, because doing so would mean having to abandon the pleasures of the present moment and accepting responsibility for her actions. She is "blown about like a leaf...I never have any free-will."[42] So she obeys Hollingsworth when he sends her to Westervelt who uses her as the "veiled lady." And she is able to forget about Zenobia's injuries at the hands of Hollingsworth, rendering herself unable to perceive his faults by simply refusing to believe that he is less than perfect. By so doing she avoids judging Hollingsworth for his past actions and is able to forget her feelings of guilt for having taken Zenobia's chosen man from her.

Her fate is almost that of a victim, although she does not recognize it as such. Her subsequent life is limited to being a support, mental and physical, for the shattered Hollingsworth, and her happiness is only "veiled." Her relationship with Hollingsworth is not complete, not a full partnership like the better adjusted Josiah and Miriam or even like that of Donatello and his Miriam. Rather it is as incomplete as Kenyon's and Hilda's.

It is interesting to note that Priscilla's and Hollingsworth's relationship is a partnership in which past mistakes are not rectified. Hollingsworth continues to be past-burdened, much like Donatello is when he is crushed by guilt for the death of the model, focussing on his guilt for Zenobia's death: "Ever since we parted, I have been busy with a single murderer!"[43] Priscilla continues to deny the past by refusing to believe that Hollingsworth could have made an error. Living in this inappropriate manner, they manifest little joy. They are, in fact, pictured as incomplete beings: Hollingsworth is a mental cripple and Priscilla acts merely as his crutch.

The major character in this group, Hilda (The Marble Faun), differs from Priscilla, Georgiana and Beatrice because she appears to become properly oriented near the end of the story. In truth, however, of the four major characters in this novel, she is the only one to retreat into her original, present-only awareness, and thereby is not transformed. Even Kenyon shifts from being properly oriented to being too concerned with the present, although his transformation is tragic.

Throughout the novel, Hilda maintains that her duty in life is to remain sinless, despite her feeling during most of it that her purity has been corrupted by having witnessed the murder of the model. Prior to this incident Hilda's past had been spotless, and thus did not concern her at all. In fact, her past had been too spotless, because her sense of purity causes her to be unable to feel sympathy for others. For example, she feels that she must reject Miriam when Miriam becomes sinful. After the murder, her memories of it disrupt her life, a situation that eventually leads to her being unable to establish a full love-relationship with Kenyon--despite the fact that she and he ultimately become committed to each other.

Until the murder, Hilda's nearly exclusive present-orientation is most clearly seen in her desire to maintain her purity. To begin with, her lack of sinfulness is symbolized by the fact that she dresses in white and tends the shrine of the Virgin Mary. Her choice of living quarters reveals her desire to remain aloof from the sinful world, a world that, Hawthorne says, carries its past sorrows on its back. Her "dovecote" is located high above the "moral dust and mud"[44] of the other occupants of the ancient city. For Hawthorne, Rome represents the past, which is sinful: there one experiences more often than elsewhere "a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a bygone life, of which this spot was the center, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here as elsewhere...Side by side with the massiveness of the Roman past, all matters that we handle or dream of nowadays look evanescent and visionary alike."[45] From her lofty perch, Hilda can choose when to enter the "corrupted atmosphere"[46] of the streets, and more important, she can retreat from it to her apartment whenever she wishes.

Her desire to remain pure is also manifested in her attitude toward Beatrice Cenci. Her feeling of compassion for Beatrice lasts only until Hilda is reminded that this girl did not consider herself sinless. Realizing this, Hilda immediately renounces her: "'Her doom is just!'"[47] This judgment is so arbitrary that Miriam is prompted to compare Hilda's innocence to a "sharp steel sword".[48] After the murder, when Miriam comes to Hilda's place in great turmoil, Hilda rejects her friend in the same outright way, on the grounds that to involve herself further in the sinfulness of the murder would endanger her purity. She feels that, were she to respond to Miriam, "The pure, white atmosphere, in which I try to discern what things are good and true, would be discolored."[49] Miriam's response is entirely accurate when she accuses Hilda of being merciless: "As an angel, you are not amiss; but, as a human creature, and a woman among earthly men and women, you need a sin to soften you."[50] Because in The Marble Faun sin is the way in which the past is bound to the present, Hilda's rejection of Miriam can be seen as an attempt to rid herself of the past.

Hilda concerns herself almost exclusively with the present as well as deliberately denying the importance of the past. Before the murder, when Kenyon asks her if she is sure that Miriam is what she appears to be, Hilda responds angrily that she knows all she needs to know of Miriam from her actions; to know Miriam's past is not necessary. Then, in the Coliseum, Hilda responds to the evening scene only as it presents itself to her eyes, and accuses Kenyon of bringing "a gothic horror into this peaceful moonlight scene"[51] when he mentions emperor Vespasian and his gladiatorial contests. Again, when Kenyon speaks of the ancient chasm of Curtius into which Miriam claims Rome fell, Hilda says that she has never looked into it. The past contains no message for her. Moreover, she denies that the chasm ever existed and maintains that the only void she is aware of is the one caused by "the evil within us."[52] Even this evil is not innate, she says, in a statement indicating her belief in the possibility of a life unspotted by previously committed sin. This is a position from which she never consciously retreats, even when she later declares that she understands "how the sins of generations past have created an atmosphere of sin for those that follow."[53]

Despite Hilda's belief in her own purity, Hawthorne establishes an ironic distance between her perception of her position and his own authorial statements on the subject. When these are taken into account, Hilda does not appear to be so clearly an allegorical 'Virtue' assaulted by 'Sin'. Instead, she assumes a more typically Hawthornian ambiguity in which she is associated with the sinful world. For example, her ambiguousness is suggested in his description of the stairway leading to her rooms as being "worthy to be Jacob's ladder, or at all events, the staircase of the tower of Babel."[54] This leaves the reader with a choice: either the stairway is the pathway to heaven, or it is a manifestation of the vaunting pride that would claim purity for itself. Further, while it is true that Hilda lives at the top of the stairs above the level of common people, above that of "princes, cardinals and ambassadors",[55] and even above other artists, she nonetheless remains a part of the world--not of heaven--because she lives "just beneath the unattainable sky."[56] In other words, despite her saintly qualities, Hilda is not a saint, even before she witnesses the murder. Instead of being considered simply a type of female purity, Hilda should be seen, at best, as a character who attempts to become pure.

However, Hilda finds that she cannot rid herself of the past merely by denying Miriam. Like her estranged friend, who attempts to deny her sinful past, she becomes plagued by her awareness of the murder. She now feels that "each innocent one must feel his innocence tortured"[57] by the guilt of others. As a result, the ensuing summer is ruined for her. Despite her attempts to forget the past, "she stumbled, ever and again, over this deadly idea of mortal guilt."[58] Like Reuben Bourne, Hilda has become a character whose awareness of the present has been narrowed by her refusal to accept the sinful past. As a result, she cannot now derive much pleasure from the paintings of her beloved masters. Da Vinci's Joana of Aragon, for example, only attracts her eyes, while "a fancied resemblance to Miriam had immediately drawn away her thoughts,"[59] so when she leaves the gallery, she goes home and paints a picture of herself staring horrified at a blood stain on her white robe. She is unable to continue her work because she cannot adequately focus on the present: "now that her capacity of emotion was choked up with a horrible experience, it inevitably followed that she should seek in vain, among those friends [the old masters] so venerated and beloved, for the marvels which they had heretofore shown her."[60]

The only master to whose paintings she can still respond are those of Fra Angelico, because they remind her of the innocence she feels she has lost. This painter is used by Hawthorne at this point to contrast Donatello, who has now accepted his place in the sinful world, to Hilda, who is struggling to deny that she has any association with sin whatever. She feels inspired by the innocence of Fra Angelico's subjects, whereas Donatello rejects his paintings because he feels his subjects look too pure to have anything to do with the world. "'His angels look as if they had never taken flight out of heaven' and his saints seem to have been born saints, and always to have lived so.'"[61] They have little to say to Donatello in his present condition of sinfulness. Not that Donatello has accepted sin as something to be sought after. Rather, he merely acknowledges the presence of sin in order to deal with his guilt. This is unlike Hilda, who tries to ignore hers.

So Donatello is a more appealing character because he has the courage to deal with his past experience and to resist fleeing from it. Hilda is less positive because she desires only to retreat from her knowledge of the past by denying that she belongs in the sinful world.

After Hilda spends considerable time brooding on her knowledge of the murder, and wishing that she could feel pure again, she eventually tries to rid herself of her memories. Living in Catholic Italy, and being the virgin keeper of a shrine to the Virgin Mary, it is perhaps inevitable that she should try to find relief by appealing to the saint of her dovecote. As she wanders from gallery to gallery, "crushed down in spirit with the desolation of her ruin, and the hopelessness of her future,"[62] she tries to find an image of the Virgin Mary that she will feel comfortable praying to.

The image she searches for is one that is more than merely holy, but is one which incorporates a sense of the sinful past. It must be "a face of celestial beauty, but human as well as heavenly, and with the shadow of a past grief upon it; bright with immortal youth, yet matronly and motherly..."[63] This is, ironically enough, precisely the kind of woman that Hilda must become in order to deal properly with her past. However, she fails to find the appropriate face. Instead, she gushes out her prayer beneath a mosaic depicting Virtue triumphing over Evil, the moral of which "appealed as much to Puritans as Catholics."[64] This choice of pictures beneath which to pray is symbolic of her concept of her place in the world and of her attitude toward the sinful past. She still feels that virtue consists of denying the existence of sin.

Hilda appears to have achieved her goal of sinless, exclusively present-oriented existence after she confesses to the priest in St. Peter's basilica. She leaves the confessional feeling refreshed, her heart full of happiness, and able once more to return to her work. That she now feels she has escaped from the gloomy past is revealed in her statement that, "in Rome, there is something dreary and awful, which we can never escape. At least, I thought so yesterday."[65]

But the truth is that she has not really escaped the past at all, because the act of confession has only given her the strength to suppress it. She now "had an elastic faculty of throwing off such recollections as would be too painful for endurance;"[66] as well, "once she had been enabled to relieve herself of the ponderous anguish over which she had so long brooded, she had practised a subtile watchfulness in preventing its return."[67] So when Kenyon mentions Miriam, Hilda exclaims, "'Do not even utter her name! Try not to think of it...It may bring terrible consequences!'"[68] His "reference to this one dismal topic had set, as it were, a prison door ajar, and allowed a throng of torturing reflections to escape from their dungeons into the pure air and white radiance of her soul."[69] These reminders of the crime have been exorcised from Hilda's mind, and Kenyon's attention to them is therefore very upsetting.

Keeping this desire to deny the past in mind, the reader can see that Hilda's delivery of the sealed packet to the Palazzo Cenci is not so much her acknowledgment of the past's importance, even though it is a journey into the historical Roman past, but is another attempt on her part to sever her ties to her personal past. Failure to fulfill her promise would have placed her forever in Miriam's debt. As it is, she delivers the packet and finally erases all conscious connection between herself and the crime, and at the same time placates her conscience concerning her possible selfishness in rejecting Miriam. Her feeling for Miriam, which had never completely died, had caused her to remember the packet and to feel guilty about not delivering it. So after she fulfills her obligation by delivering the packet, she feels justified in saying that she and Miriam "are separated forever", and that Miriam is "a dead friend".[70]

The result is predictable. She returns from the palace still convinced that the past is to be denied. Her position is epitomized by her refusal to accept Kenyon's explanation of Donatello's development through sin. In so doing, she denies the possibility that sin can be the means by which all humans can "ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than [Adam's]."[71] For her, the sinlessness of Eden is enough, and although she cannot offer Kenyon a better explanation for Donatello's improvement, she convinces him not to consider his own explanation true.

Hawthorne allows that Hilda may possibly perceive Eden, but if she does, he suggests that she has robbed herself of more complete happiness. She sees Eden only as Adam did, "in a brighter sunshine, but never knew the pensive beauty which Eden won from his expulsion."[72] The reason that she cannot see the "pensive beauty" is that she cannot take up the human burden of sin that the past represents.

It is Donatello and Miriam who understand and appreciate the nature of the post-lapsarian world. Their relationship has the kind of beauty that Hilda's and Kenyon's lacks, because it consists of a complete and open expression of their love. So that, because they have integrated the past and the present, they are able to be gay during the carnival even though both of them realize that they will be separated when Donatello gives himself up. In contract to their situation, Hilda has merely a "shy affection"[73] to give to Kenyon, who has won her in part by denying what he feels is a possible explanation of the place of sin in the world. Their present-only orientation merely ensures that Hilda will be "enshrined and worshipped as a household saint,"[74] not loved with the fulness that Donatello loves Miriam.

Although Hawthorne leaves his two positive characters in this novel properly oriented, he finally compromises his ending by refusing to acknowledge fully what he has been leading toward throughout the story--that, if sainthood is defined as total freedom from any contact with sin, then sainthood is not possible, or even desirable, in a morally ambiguous world. In great detail, he has shown that the sinner, Donatello, achieves a real and significant development because his life incorporates both the sin of the past and the love of the present in dynamic combination. He has made him into a type of the noble, moral man. The 'saint', on the other hand, achieves at most an illusion of purity by denying her past and by collapsing into the tepid security of her affection for Kenyon. Yet Hawthorne leaves Donatello in jail, and allows Hilda to return to America. By so doing, he fails to answer clearly the major question posed by his novel: what is the nature and the function of sin in human existence?

Present-oriented characters like Hilda do not achieve the degree of satisfaction that properly oriented characters attain. Usually, they do not develop significantly, and in two cases (Georgiana's and Beatrice's) they are actually destroyed. However, Hawthorne provides two examples of present-oriented characters who do become happy when they achieve a proper awareness of the past, as well as of the present. Phoebe (The House of the Seven Gables) and Pearl (The Scarlet Letter) both find love and peace as a result of becoming aware of the past. Phoebe becomes properly oriented when she begins to be aware of the ancient curse that haunts the residents of the old Pyncheon mansion; Pearl becomes aware of both the past and the present when she feels sorrow for the first time.

Phoebe contrasts to all three other characters in The House of the Seven Gables because her present life is not burdened by an oppressive sense of previous events. In fact, her life centres too exclusively on the present, without being adequately aware of the effects of her familial background on either herself or on Hepzibah and Clifford. The other major characters are all too past-oriented: Holgrave considers the events of the present to be important merely because they seem to be the outgrowth of the curse invoked against the Pyncheons by his ancestor, Matthew Maule; and Hepzibah "has lost all true relation to [society], and is, in fact, dead",[75] while Clifford is "another dead and long-buried person, on whom the governor and council have wrought a necromantic miracle."[76]

Unlike these characters, Phoebe is dissociated from the past and is linked to the present by Hawthorne's descriptions. Early in the novel, for example, she is contrasted to "the time-worm framework of the door [of the old house]"[77] to the aged Hepzibah who is not suited to "any useful purpose",[78] to the old lady who barters with her at the shopwindow, and to Clifford whose life is "blighted" in comparison to her "fresh life".[79] She is also dissociated from her ancestors in Uncle Venner's comment that he cannot remember another Pyncheon whom she resembles. As well, when Hepzibah loses herself in reminiscences of the Pyncheon past and of the treasure that could enable them to close their shop forever, Phoebe gently ignores her cousin's reveries and goes off to respond to the customer who is presently in the shop. Her buoyant personality offsets those of her past-oriented cousins, Clifford and Hepzibah, and influences their present lives by being "absolutely essential to the daily comfort, if not the daily life, of her two forlorn companions."[80] Last, the change she produces in her bedroom is typical of her attitude and her influence. Before she uses it, it is compared to Hepzibah's heart, which for years has contained nothing but "ghosts and ghostly reminiscences."[81] But after she rearranges it, the room reawakens: "it was now a maiden's bedchamber, and had been purified of all former evil and sorrow by her sweet breath and happy thoughts".[82] This is Phoebe's effect on everyone around her--her presence banishes the past by bathing the present in her simple cheerfulness.

Other descriptions of her establish her immediacy, her vital participation in the ongoing 'now'. She is at various times "active",[83] "bright, cheerful and efficient",[84] "elastic",[85] possessed of "an active temperament"[86] and a "spontaneous grace",[87] and is able to "think the thought proper for the moment".[88]

Being present-oriented like this is to a great extent positive. In fact, Phoebe's actions and thoughts during most of the novel seem to be largely those of a character who is properly oriented to the present. However, her lack of an adequate awareness of the past is established in three situations. First, when Holgrave tries to explain to her "what slaves we are to bygone times..."[89] she does not understand him. In this regard, she comprehends none of his objections to living in ancient houses despite the obvious ill effects on Hepzibah of having confined herself in the Pyncheon mansion for too long. Second, she has no objections to living in houses like the mansion with their long pasts "so long as we can be comfortable in them".[90] Yet, immediately prior to her departure from the house, she is not as uniformly cheerful as when she came, and does not smile as much. Third, when Holgrave suggests that the curse may have some influence on present events, she dismisses his comment as being "what is so very absurd".[91] However, Hawthorne repeatedly mentions that the curse, one agency through which the past enters the affairs of the present in this work, does influence the course of events. For example, Holgrave's presence in the house is due in the first place to his fascination with his family's part in the curse of the Pyncheons, and Judge Pyncheon's death is attributed to the ailment that has plagued his family since their unjust seizure of Matthew Maule's land. Without Holgrave's interest and the Judge's death, neither Phoebe's happiness, nor Clifford's recovery, nor their sudden wealth, would have been assured. So Phoebe's assertion is misguided; the curse does exert a definite influence on both her life and on Holgrave's.

Phoebe eventually does recognize that the past has a place in the present, and that she is affected by it. As the story progresses, she becomes more reflective than she had been. She is aware of becoming older, and she no longer feels the freshness of the evening but realizes that it too is aging. As well, she begins to wonder about Clifford's past, in order to discover more about his present weakened condition. In so doing, she wonders about the cause of his enfeeblement, and whether it is the result of "some calamity",[92] or whether it is his natural condition. As a result of delving into his history, she comes to understand him better, and does more good for him than she had when she had been naively cheerful all of the time. For instance, she realizes that she should not look too deeply into Clifford's moods out of respect for the immensity of the sorrow he feels. As well, as she sits in the garden with Holgrave, she reveals that she has become sobered during her association with Clifford and Hepzibah: she does not have "half so much lightness in my spirits".[93] This is in direct contrast to Holgrave, who is becoming more aware of the present. In fact, this scene is used by Hawthorne to show how they are both drawing closer to a proper awareness of the past and the present, which is the major change by which Hawthorne shows that they are falling in love.

That Phoebe's final awareness of the past is properly integrated with the present is indicated by her union with Holgrave. In the first place, her involvement in the present is assured by her continuing love for him. In the second, because Holgrave is a Maule, he has in one sense caused her to become aware of, and more closely involved with, her family's past--it is their marriage that will end forever the enmity between the Maules and the Pyncheons. So, after becoming aware of the past without compromising her involvement in the present, Phoebe becomes properly oriented, and thereby achieves happiness.

Like Phoebe, Pearl also achieves a measure of happiness. However, in her case, one limitation must be made to my argument in order that she can be clearly seen to be too present-oriented. Although she is treated here as a present-oriented character, she is also symbolic of the past for both Dimmesdale and Hester because she represents their past indiscretion in both her outlandish dress and in her peculiarly pointed questions to him. While this is true, the discussion that follows does not deal with Pearl's symbolic value. Instead, Pearl's own awareness of the past and the present is treated, as is the situation with all characters in this study. In terms of her own awareness, Pearl exhibits an almost exclusive orientation to the present.

Her personality is the result of the lawless actions of her parents in conceiving her: "she seemed the unpremeditated offshoot of a passionate moment"[94] to whom established rules of behavior, representative of the past in their traditional existence, are foreign. She "lacked reference and adaptation to the world into which she was born. The child could not be made amenable to rules".[95] She is therefore "like a creature that had nothing in common with a bygone and buried generation, nor owed herself akin to it. It was as if she had been made afresh, out of new elements, and must perforce be permitted to live her own life, and be a law reckoned unto herself ..."[96]

Her actions are evidence that she concerns herself almost exclusively with the present, and that she lives according to "'the freedom of a broken law'".[97] Throughout the novel she flits and cavorts spontaneously, "like a thing incapable of and unintelligent of human sorrow".[98] For her to be sorrowful would mean that she would have to cease enjoying the present and reflect on the past, an act that would be uncharacteristic of this sprite of the moment. Her major personality trait is her "never-failing vivacity of spirits"[99] in which she plays by the seashore or runs after a shaft of sunshine in the forest. One of her most vivacious moods occurs on the election holiday, when she resembles "nothing so much as the shimmer of a diamond, that sparkles and flashes with the varied throbbings of the breast on which it is displayed".[100]

As long as Pearl remains aware only of the present, she is described as a little demon, and as a possessed child. What she needs is to develop a meaningful past, to experience a grief that will enable her subsequently to feel compassion for others: "She wanted--what some people want throughout life--a grief that should deeply touch her, and thus humanize and make her capable of sympathy".[101] As she exists throughout most of the novel, she does not have any prior sadness in her life by which to regulate her response to present events. Until she encounters a situation that leaves its mark of sorrow on her, and thereby makes her meaningfully aware of the past, Pearl is not fully human.

She does not experience such a sorrow until the final scaffold scene where Dimmesdale reveals his identity as Hester's lover. Once Pearl feels grief at the death of her father, she is assured of growing up "amid human joy and sorrow" because she is not assured of a meaningful awareness of the past in her subsequent life.

Her fate is typical of properly oriented characters in its peace and contentment. The life she apparently leads after her mother and she leave the settlement is the kind of life that ensures adequate involvement in the present--marriage and child-rearing. At the same time, she does not ignore the past: she thoughtfully remembers her mother by corresponding with her, by sending her gifts, and by her evident desire to have her mother with her.

As I have earlier stated, characters like Peark, who exhibit an orientation to the present, form a heterogeneous group. They are much more individualized than the figures who form the first group of properly oriented characters, and because of this they are more interesting. As this essay has shown, characters in this second group are usually more directly involved in tragic events than are those of the first one, so that their fates are sometimes more sombre. Yet, most major characters in Hawthorne's work usually belong to a third group who are burdened by the past in various ways. Characters in this group, who will be examined in the next two chapters, are the most carefully developed of all Hawthorne's creations, and consequently they are the most interesting of all. Just as in the case of the second group, characters in this group attain a proper awareness of the past and the present, while others fail to do so. Success or failure in this regard determines their level of contentment and happiness, as it does for the previous two groups.

NOTES

[1] Hyatt H. Waggoner - Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Tales and Sketches, Toronto, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 201 Subsequently referred to as Waggoner.

[2] Waggoner, p. 202

[3] Nathaniel Hawthorne, Twice Told Tales, p. 245. Subsequently referred to as Anderson.

[4] Anderson, p. 245

[5] Anderson, p. 245

[6] Anderson, p. 246

[7] Anderson, p. 249

[8] Anderson, p. 155

[9] Anderson, p. 156

[10] Anderson, p. 156

[11] Anderson, p. 159

[12] Anderson, p. 159

[13] Waggoner, p. 58

[14] Waggoner, p. 66

[15] Waggoner, p. 66

[16] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Complete Writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, V, p. 3. Subsequently referred to by volume and page number.

[17] V, 22

[18] V, 29

[19] V, 27

[20] V, 27

[21] V, 29

[22] Waggoner, p. 33

[23] Waggoner, p. 33

[24] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, p. 84. Subsequently referred to as M.F.

[25] M.F., p. 176

[26] M.F., p. 199

[27] M.F., p. 280

[28] M.F., p. 280

[29] M.F., p. 91

[30] M.F., p. 295

[31] M.F., 312-312

[32] M.F., 313

[33] M.F., 313

[34] Waggoner, p. 207

[35] Waggoner, p. 207

[36] Waggoner, p. 214

[37] Waggoner, p. 217

[38] Waggoner, p. 296

[39] Waggoner, p. 284-285

[40] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance, p. 74. Subsequently referred to as B.R.

[41] B.R., p. 76

[42] B.R., p. 171

[43] B.R., p. 243

[44] M.F., 41

[45] M.F., 9-10

[46] M.F., p. 41

[47] M.F., p. 49

[48] M.F., p. 49

[49] M.F., p. 144

[50] M.F., p. 144

[51] M.F., p. 109

[52] M.F., p. 113

[53] M.F., p. 147

[54] M.F., p. 40

[55] M.F., p. 223

[56] M.F., p. 223

[57] M.F., p. 147

[58] M.F., p. 226

[59] M.F., p. 226

[60] M.F., p. 230

[61] M.F., p. 213

[62] M.F., p. 223

[63] M.F., p. 238

[64] M.F., p. 240

[65] M.F., p. 253

[66] M.F., p. 260

[67] M.F., p. 261

[68] M.F., p. 261

[69] M.F., p. 262

[70] M.F., p. 264

[71] M.F., p. 312

[72] M.F., p. 190

[73] M.F., p. 313

[74] M.F., p. 313

[75] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, p. 190. Subsequently referred to as H.S.G.

[76] H.S.G., p. 191

[77] H.S.G., p. 66

[78] H.S.G., p. 73

[79] H.S.G., p. 124

[80] H.S.G., p. 123

[81] H.S.G., p. 69

[82] H.S.G., p. 69

[83] H.S.G., p. 72

[84] H.S.G., p. 72

[85] H.S.G., p. 76

[86] H.S.G., p. 72

[87] H.S.G., p. 78

[88] H.S.G., p. 123

[89] H.S.G., p. 162

[90] H.S.G., p. 163

[91] H.S.G., p. 164

[92] H.S.G., p. 129

[93] H.S.G., p. 189

[94] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 96. Subsequently referred to as S.L.

[95] S.L. 85 - 86

[96] S.L., p. 129

[97] S.L., p. 128

[98] S.L., p. 88

[99] S.L., p. 177

[100] S.L., p. 220

[101] S.L., p. 178

[80] H.S.G., p. 123

[81] H.S.G., p. 69

[82] H.S.G., p. 69

[83] H.S.G., p. 72

[84] H.S.G., p. 72

[85] H.S.G., p. 76

[86] H.S.G., p. 72

[87] H.S.G., p. 78

[88] H.S.G., p. 123

[89] H.S.G., p. 162

[90] H.S.G., p. 163

[91] H.S.G., p. 164

[92] H.S.G., p. 129

[93] H.S.G., p. 189

[94] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, p. 96. Subsequently referred to as S.L.

[95] S.L. 85 - 86

[96] S.L., p. 129

[97] S.L., p. 128

[98] S.L., p. 88

[99] S.L., p. 177

[100] S.L., p. 220

[101] S.L., p. 178

CHAPTER III

PAST-ORIENTED CHARACTERS: PROJECTORS

This chapter and the one following consider characters who are abstracted, at least temporarily, from the present when they become too concerned with particular aspects of their pasts. Some feel guilt, others have suffered injustices that burden them, one is fascinated by his family's past and another suffers the consequences of jealousy. One group of nine characters, who will henceforth be referred to as 'projectors', is obsessed with the attempt to accomplish preconceived goals. Because this last group contains so many important characters (among them Ethan Brand, Hollingsworth, Rappaccini and Chillingworth), this chapter is restricted largely to an examination of them.

Before embarking on the analysis of these projectors, however, one character will be considered who, at different stages, exhibits all three of the temporal orientations presented in this essay. Because of his unique position in Hawthorne's work, Donatello (The Marble Faun) provides a convenient transition between the first two groups of characters already discussed (those who are properly oriented and those who are concerned with the present), and the third group who are past-burdened. He is in turn too present-oriented, then too burdened by the past, then finally aware of both the past and the present.

Hawthorne reveals Donatello's changing orientations in three ways. In the early part of the story, he dissociates Donatello from the past by showing that he knows little of either history or of his own past. Second, he shows the extent of Donatello's present orientation by comparing and contrasting him, at different points in the novel, to Miriam, who is oppressed by her awareness of the past. Third, he uses the image of the Faun of Praxiteles to identify Donatello's shifts in awareness of the past and the present: when Donatello becomes burdened by the murder, Hawthorne ceases to compare him favourably to the faun and begins instead to contrast him to it; and once Donatello begins to show signs of attaining a proper awareness of both past and present, Hawthorne again evokes some of the earlier comparisons.

Hawthorne establishes Donatello's initial present-orientation by characterizing him as naive. Before his act of pushing the model over the precipice, Donatello expresses little knowledge of the past, and reveals that he is at times not even aware of its influence. This characteristic in itself causes him to appear present-oriented. For example, when Miriam speaks of figures from mythology, Donatello does not know what she is talking about; as she speaks, he responds only to her facial expression, not to the meaning of her words: he "appeared only to know that Miriam was beautiful, and that she smiled graciously upon him; that the present moment was very sweet, and himself most happy".[1] Later, his lack of knowledge of Roman history is revealed when, as he and Miriam stand on the parapet before the murder, he must struggle in order "to make himself conscious of the historic associations of the scene".[2] Even then, he cannot recall which Romans had been flung over the precipice, and must ask Miriam.

The reader's perception of Donatello is consistently unencumbered by any sense that he is guided by his past experience or that he feels grief for any previous actions. He is too busy enjoying the company of his friends as they visit the galleries of Rome, and too engrossed in the companionship Miriam affords him when they stroll, then dance, in the Villa Borghese. Nor does Donatello realize the effect of the past on him. For example, he does not perceive the saddening influence of his months among the "ancient dust"[3] of Rome, with its "moldiness"[4] and its "smell of ruin and decaying generations".[5] But, when he visits the Borghese villa, he becomes aware that a burden has been lifted from his shoulders, as he is again able to respond spontaneously to his surroundings. In short, Hawthorne at first presents Donatello as a curiously undeveloped being whose only concern is to derive all the happiness he can from the present moment, and to whom Miriam is justified in saying, "What a child you are, poor Donatello!"[6]

In the opening chapters, Donatello contrasts greatly to Miriam, whose melancholy nature makes his spontaneous actions seem inconsequential and at times slightly ludicrous. Their meeting at the Villa is a meeting of opposites: he is a sprite of the transitory moment, aware of the "flicker of sunshine, the sparkle of the fountain's gush..."[7], who encounters a spirit brooding on her past. He appears to be aware only "that the present moment was very sweet",[8] while she is "already turbid with grief or wrong".[9]

Despite his obvious happiness and her equally obvious depression, Hawthorne does not présent Donatello's situation as being preferable to hers. Instead, he states that the effect of Miriam's reflective personality on him is beneficial: "his character needed the dark element, which it found in her".[10] He cannot become fully human, Hawthorne says, until he becomes "burdened with sin and sorrow".[11] As Donatello exists at this point, he does not feel responsibility for his previous actions. Even when he and Miriam dance unrestrainedly together, they still their different orientations. In fact, Hawthorne says that their dancing contains the "ultimate peculiarity"[12] that distinguishes them. Miriam's movements remain 'artful', which limits her spontaneity, whereas Donatello's are natural "grotesqueness hand in hand with grace".[13] 'Art' in this context is a term that Hawthorne uses to indicate prior learning, and is opposed to nature, which in this situation implies spontaneity. In this way, Miriam's 'artfulness' is evidence that even in her dancing, her past determines her present actions. Contrarily, Donatello responds to the whims of the moment more completely, warning Miriam that, "If we take breath, we shall be as we were yesterday. There, now, is the music, just beyond this clump of trees."[14]

The third way in which Hawthorne asserts Donatello's past-orientation is to compare him extensively to the faun. Despite the fact that the figure of the faun belongs to the mythology of a past age, Hawthorne uses it to emphasize Donatello's present-orientation and his light-hearted approach to living. Like this mythical creature, Donatello is mirthful and innocent of principles of virtue and morality. In the same way that the faun had "no conscience, no remorse, no burden on the heart, no troublesome recollections of any sort; no dark future, either",[15] Donatello "has nothing to do with time [a term which, here, signifies age], but has a look of eternal youth in his face".[16] Traditional values and rules of conduct have not burdened him yet; at least they have not curbed his effervescent and insatiable appetite for pleasure.

As Hawthorne indicates, prior to Donatello pushing the model off the precipice, Donatello needs to become conscious of sin and sorrow. But after the murder. he is a character whose consciousness is pervaded by sin. Whereas before the murder Donatello had "lived with completeness in the present moment",[17] subsequent to it he becomes so preoccupied with his guilty act that he can no longer be spontaneous or happy. Even though sin is the agency by which he becomes fully human, it does not allow him to be happy because it only causes him to lose sight, temporarily, of the present. So instead of being partially happy, but incompletely a man, he is now a man but completely obsessed.

The extent of his obsession is revealed in his inability to derive meaning and pleasure from events subsequent to his guilty act. When he returns to his home at Monte Beni, he is no longer aware of the beauty that surrounds him there in the Appenines; as well the small animals are now afraid of him, and he cannot feel any more the transitory joys of dancing, or attending plays or of listening to recitals. Moreover, because he broods morbidly over the murder, he doesn't think to rid himself of his obsessive guilt feelings through performing good works. Kenyon is the person who later suggests this course of action. Most of all, Donatello's fixation has caused him to be unable to feel the love he has for Miriam--throughout this period in which he is obsessed, his need for her lies dormant.

Donatello's past-orientation is also revealed by the fact that Hawthorne no longer compares him to the present-oriented faun or contrasts him to the past-burdened Miriam. Instead, he reverses the procedure. Now he contrasts Donatello to the faun, and compares him favourably to Miriam.

Hawthorne uses the faun image to describe the torment Donatello feels on the day after the murder: "bewildered with the novelty of sin and grief, he had little left of the singular resemblance, on account of which, and for their sport, his three friends had fantastically recognized him as the veritable Faun of Praxiteles".[18] Donatello's grief and sense of sin have so invaded his mind that he begins to see his life subsequent to the murder merely as penance for having sinned. Because he believes this, he can be understood to be in a position opposite to that of the faun, for whom the present does not contain any reflection of the past. For instance, whenever Donatello sees one of the black crosses that dot the Italian roadsides, he is reminded only of his need for penitence for the murder. He does not recognize the crosses for what they truly are, images of salvation, of "the never-failing beneficence of the Creator towards man in his transitory state".[19]

Immediately after the murder, Hawthorne no longer contrasts Miriam and Donatello, but begins to establish similarities between them, and to reveal their now common orientation to the past. "They trod through the streets of Rome, as if they, too, were among the majestic and guilty shadows that, from ages long gone by, have haunted the blood-stained city".[20] Because they are now murderers, Miriam feels that they are brothers to the men who murdered Caesar. Their one crime has made them guilty of all crimes ever committed, thereby uniting them with all other criminals of the past.

When Donatello's love for Miriam appears to evaporate, he leaves Rome for his rural home in the Appenine mountains, where his life is given over to gloomy ruminations on his sinful act and its consequences. But Kenyon, shortly after arriving to visit, discovers that Donatello's situation may not be as hopeless as it seems. According to him, Donatello's "remorse, gnawing into his soul, has awakened it; developing a thousand high capabilities, moral and intellectual..."[21] At this point, Donatello does not realize that this development has begun, although he does have an original thought which, even if it is trite, reveals that his mind is now active with more than guilty memories.

While it is true that he has only one painful experience through which to become aware of his past, it is enough, a fact that Hawthorne indicates by evoking the image of the small shrub growing in the tower. The shrub is symbolic of Donatello in that, although it has had only a little crumbled mortar in which to exist, it has lived in its niche for a long time without appearing to develop beyond its present size. Donatello's life parallels that of the shrub in that he has remained childlike long after he should have developed adult sensibilities. In The Marble Faun, being an adult means accepting responsibility for the sinful past. The figure of the shrub enables Hawthorne to foreshadow Donatello's eventual triumph over his oppressive sense of having sinned when Donatello removes the harmful worm from it.

Once he and Kenyon leave on their journey, Donatello becomes "a healthier spirit"[22] because he is now forced to become involved actively in present events, and can no longer hide away from them as he had been able to avoid the travelling minstrels at Monte Beni. Now he must encounter a "change of scene, the breaking up of custom, the fresh flow of incidents..."[23] Further, his returning awareness of the present is also established by the fact that Hawthorne begins anew to compare Donatello favourably to the faun. This occurs when Kenyon suggests to Donatello that he should dedicate himself to doing good works, rather than remaining shut up in the prison of his reflections. As the possibility sinks into Donatello's mind, Hawthorne states that "still there was a resemblance [to the faun]; for now, when first the idea was suggested of living for the welfare of his fellow creatures, the original beauty, which sorrow had partly effaced, came back elevated and spiritualized".[24] As the trip progresses, Donatello begins to feel happiness as the result of his generous alms-giving, which marks the first time since the murder that present events have not merely reminded him of his sinfulness.

To this point, even Miriam's song, sung underneath his tower, had only made Donatello feel his anguish more acutely. However, by continuing to be generous, he gradually disburdens his mind of his guilt feelings. By doing so he is able to become aware once more of his feelings for this woman for whom he had killed the model. When they meet again at Perugia, he can finally admit his love for her, an act that makes his present life more meaningful by giving it a purpose and direction. The fact that they both feel love for each other establishes their final similarity that, unlike their previous shared sense of the past's oppressiveness, joins them in a sombre kind of happiness.

While it is true that Donatello has been elevated and educated by sin to a level where he understands love to be more than just pleasure, his education is still incomplete. Up to this point in the novel, he has not acted entirely on his own to rid himself of the past's oppressiveness, but has relied on the sometimes platitudinous advice of Kenyon. For example, he would not have met Miriam if Kenyon had not insisted on taking the trip. But his last act of the novel is one that he makes because he finally becomes aware of his own best interests. By deciding to give himself up to justice, even to the suspect justice of Italy, he acts positively, on his own, to rid himself of his feelings of guilt. By so doing, he avoids the more debilitating anguish of a character like Reuben Bourne, who does not act to expiate his sin until it has driven him to the edge of sanity. Going to jail is the only way he can atone for his past and rid himself of its dominating influence, just as returning to Malvin is the only way Bourne can atone for his.

At the conclusion, Donatello's fate is not unhappy, despite his imprisonment, because by acquiring a sinful past he has attained both a higher level of awareness and Miriam's love. He has, as Miriam recognizes, "travelled in a circle, as all things heavenly and earthly do, and now comes back to his original self, with an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain".[25] This development has consisted of becoming aware of the sinful past and then of acting positively to avoid remaining obsessed by it. As a result, his life now exemplifies the truth in Hawthorne's statement that "The life of the flitting moment, existing in the antique shell of an age gone by, has a fascination which we do not find in either the past or the present, taken by themselves".[26]

The cause of Donatello's past-orientation, his murder of the model, differs significantly from that of the nine projectors, although they too become past-oriented. This is not to say that the characters included in this group are copies of each other, because they are quite distinct. The only major similarity among them is their common dedication to a project. Among them are: Richard Digby ("The Man of Adamant"), Ethan Brand ("Ethan Brand"), Hollingsworth (The Blithedale Romance), Aylmer ("The Birthmark"), Rappaccini ("Rappaccini's Daughter"), Baglioni and Giovanni (also "Rappaccini's Daughter"), Chillingworth (The Scarlet Letter), and Owen Warland ("The Artist of the Beautiful"). All of these characters become obsessed by one idea, and thereafter do not pay sufficient attention to the events of the present. Beyond this, even their motivations are widely different. For example, Rappaccini is determined to protect his daughter, while Hollingsworth is fixated on his attempt at penal reform, and Aylmer on his attempt to make his wife perfect.

Despite their differences, these characters all have a single-minded desire to achieve a fixed goal. The word 'fixed' is important here because all of the projectors dealt with in this chapter except one have projects that remain essentially unchanged from the time they are conceived. Because these projects are usually established well in advance of the tale's action, and because the projectors focus only on their projects, they can be said to be past-oriented. The present has ceased to be meaningful to them other than insofar as it helps them to achieve their set goals. Some ignore facts that do not fit their theories, others are so involved with realizing their ambitions that they cannot continue normal relations with those who do not share their ambitions, and still others fail to comprehend the ill effects of their projects on others. In short, they all have tried in one sense to stop their lives at the point when they established their goals, and to ignore the ongoing 'now' that is the present. The only projector who ceases to ignore it is Owen Warland, who is able to change his project according to his subsequent experience.

The reason that Hawthorne's attitude toward static projects is so antagonistic derives from his concept of the relationship between the past and the present. His position is natural when one remembers that his primary interest in the past is in its place in the present, and when one recalls "Old Esther Dudley" in which he criticizes Dudley for not paying proper attention to present events. Although previous experience necessarily influences the present, the past cannot become so important that it engulfs the present. The reason for this is that for Hawthorne the present constantly offers new experience, experience that may affect the truth of any accepted position, theory or proposition. Hawthorne's projectors, with the exception of Owen Warland, are in error, therefore, because they are not open to the truth of their experience subsequent to formulating their projects. They are so captivated by their original ideas that they fail to comprehend the evil they are doing until that evil is either wreaked on themselves or on others. It is therefore to be expected that, in Hawthorne's stories and novels, the obsessive attempt to complete a project without a proper regard for subsequent events is bound to fail. Each of the projectors to be examined below fails, at least temporarily.

"The Man of Adamant", one of Hawthorne's earlier tales, offers a brief introductory example of a character who becomes past-oriented by compulsively devoting himself to the achievement of a religious ideal. Richard Digby is totally dedicated to becoming sanctified according to his own brand of christianity, which he feels has been "intrusted to him alone".[27] By establishing this fixed project, he denies the possibility that he could later discover he is wrong, and has "yielded himself to that exclusive bigotry which now enfolded him wich such an iron grasp that no other sentiment could reach his bosom".[28] Digby leaves the village where "there were many tokens of present happiness",[29] and then separates himself further from the possibility of development by isolating himself in a cave. Hawthorne associates this location with Digby's set project by describing it in terms of the fixity of death: "If Nature meant this remote and dismal cavern for the use of man, it could only be to bury in its gloom the victims of a pestilence..."[30] The 'disease' that affects Digby's mind is his extreme dedication to a project that has remained the same since its inception. By having Digby retreat into this cave/tomb (and by implication, from reason), Hawthorne shows that he becomes more obsessed than ever, and indicates that he is less likely than ever to listen to any appeal to abandon his position.

In the dim light of the cave, Digby misreads the words of the Bible by changing what is forward-looking to what is past-oriented. He converts "all that is gracious and merciful",[31] words that suggest forgiveness for what has already occurred, to "denunciations of vengeance and unutterable woe",[32] ones that imply the oppression of prior events. In other words, Digby is unable to comprehend the Bible's truth because his dedication to his fixed goal requires that what he reads agree with what he has already decided is correct. The deleterious effects of this project are imaged in the physical disease he suffers from, which is "a deposition of calculous particles within his heart".[33] This disease hardens the heart, much as Digby's project fossilizes his mind.

Hawthorne also establishes Digby's past-orientation by contrasting him to Mary Goffe, who is properly oriented. She is a figure from his past who attempts to influence his present life. Her concern with the present is revealed in three ways: by her attempt to deal with Digby's present problem (his bigoted beliefs), by the fact that she represents the human need for companionship, and by her association with the fountain. First, she attempts to save him from the "grievous distemper"[34] of his heart, which is the result of his compulsive dedication to his project. She then begs him to return to civilization where the influence of others makes it more difficult to remain obsessed with one idea, and where human sympathies can soften even the hardest heart. Third, in a futile attempt to get him to leave the cave, she presents Digby with a drink of fresh fountain water which is the only agency that can save him from the hardening process going on inside him.

By refusing to accept the drink, he ensures his death, and becomes a stone gargoyle in the mouth of the cave. This fate is appropriate to a character who tries to live exclusively within one static set of ideas without remaining open to the enlightenment offered by his subsequent experience.

Ethan Brand is similar to Richard Digby in that both characters are obsessed with one driving ambition that precludes their awareness of its harmful effects on them. Digby, however, only becomes a bigot, while Ethan Brand becomes a "fiend".

Brand is obsessed by his desire to find the unpardonable sin. This project is the result of the fact that, long ago, he had "thrown his dark thoughts into the intensest glow of the lime-kiln's furnace, and melted them, as it were, into the one thought that took possession of his life".[35] In his search, he ignores the evil effects it has on his life (especially on his ability to feel sympathy for others), and clings instead to his original idea. As a result, although he had once been a loving, reverent and sympathetic man, he becomes a devil.

Once Brand adopts his project, he loses sight of the importance and the value of human relationships, except as they assist him in accomplishing his goal. For example, he had long ago rejected his tavern acquaintances because they had nothing to offer him in his search. So, when he is reunited with them during the course of the story, he rejects them again on the same grounds" "Years and years ago, I groped into your hearts and found nothing there for my purpose. Get ye gone!"[36] In both rejections, Brand fails to see the value that exists even in these ruined men, because he is preoccupied with his project. He therefore does not comprehend the goodness that survives within lawyer Giles, who "still kept up the courage and spirit of a man"[37] despite much adversity. In another, more poignant situation, because Brand does not respond to Esther except to use her in achieving his set goal, he is responsible for having "wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated"[38] her soul. He had not seen her as she was, a vulnerable human being, but merely considered her to be another tool to be used in his search. In all these cases Ethan Brand responds to the present as if it was only an aspect of that moment long ago in which he had conceived his project.

As well as being the reason for his mistreatment of others, Brand's past-orientation is the cause of his suicide. Once he has accomplished his project, he no longer has anything left to live for; he neither feels that he had anything more to achieve, nor can he see any value in relationships with others. So, because the present and the future are meaningless to him, he throws himself into the lime-kiln where he had long ago thrown his thoughts.

Brand's crime is that, by being completely past-oriented in his determination to discover the unpardonable sin, he has failed to remain aware of the humanity of others, and has therefore inadvertently committed the very sin that he has searched for. In his preoccupation, his intellect is the one "that triumphed over the sense of brotherhood with man and reverence for God, and sacrified everything to its own mighty claims!"[39]

Whereas both Brand and Digby are projectors who pursue a spiritual or intellectual goal, Hollingsworth (The Blithedale Romance) is possessed by a more worldly intention. He hopes to reform the penal system by constructing a special building designed to facilitate rehabilitation. However, despite the fact that his intention is laudable, it never seriously gets started. The reason for its failure is that it consists merely of a "rigid and unconquerable idea",[40] one that has engendered in Hollingsworth the narrowmindedness that accompanies all fixed plans. He is so preoccupied with achieving his goal exactly as he had initially conceived it that he is no longer aware of its harmful effects on himself or on others. The final result is that he is reduced to being an invalid who is consumed by memories of the woman, Zenobia, whose love he has callously misused.

The evidence of the story shows that Hollingsworth has been consumed by his project to the extent that even his considerable native benevolence is evident during the rare moments when his mind is not preoccupied with what Coverdale calls Hollingsworth's best friend, his "philanthropic theory".[41] The theory has not changed at all since he conceived it, nor has he any intention of modifying it. He feels completely justified in maintaining his inflexible resolve to implement his reforms, and admits as much to Coverdale: "the most marked trait in my character is an inflexible severity of purpose. Mortal man has no right to be so inflexible, as it is my nature and necessity to be!"[42] The extent of his dedication is perhaps most clearly measured by Coverdale who at one point exclaims, in an exasperated tone, "Such prolonged fiddling upon one string; such multiform presentation of one idea!"[43] It is therefore no surprise to the reader when Hollingsworth later extolls the virtues of "strength, courage, immitigable will".[44]

His wilfulness provides a rationale for his general aloofness from the Blithedale group. Because Hollingsworth is so fixated, he fails to remain adequately aware of his fellow farmers to be conscious of the effect his actions have on them. He is frequently unresponsive to their conversation because he is so absorbed by his reflections. During the first evening at Blithedale, for example, "Hollingsworth hardly said a word, unless when repeatedly and pertinaciously addressed. Then, indeed, he would glare upon us from the thick shrubbery of his meditations".[45] Later, in a discussion with Coverdale about Fourier's philosophical system, Hollingsworth reveals his lack of interest in the conversation by stating that he cannot discuss rationally a system which does not agree with his own. For the same reason, he is unable to share the goals of the other inhabitants of Blithedale, going so far as to contemplate usurping the farm for his own purpose by paying for it before the others can.

For similar reasons, Hollingsworth later rejects Coverdale's friendship because Coverdale does not wish to dedicate his life to Hollingsworth's project. This is a situation that causes Coverdale to wonder if, during his illness, "Hollingsworth could have watched by my bedside, with all that devoted care, only for the ulterior purpose of making me a proselyte to his views!"[46] That complete agreement with his project is Hollingsworth's sole criterion of a friend is later corroborated by Coverdale, who concludes that men like Hollingsworth, "who have surrendered themselves to an over-ruling purpose...will keep no friend, unless he make himself the mirror of their purpose".[47] Hollingsworth's lack of consideration for others is most dramatically revealed in his treatment of Zenobia, and to a lesser extent, of Priscilla. He uses

Zenobia deliberately in an attempt to provide his scheme with sufficient funds, and then, despite her obvious love for him, discards her like "a broken tool",[48] when she appears to be of no further use. He cannot tolerate any reaction to his plans except complete sympathy, which he finally receives from Priscilla. However, before her usefulness becomes apparent to him, he allows her to fall into Westervelt's hands, where she is used ambiguously as his "veiled lady". He states that he loves her only after he realizes that, for her, he is faultless. And even then, his avowal has no real force in it. His 'love' for her is really only a function of his long-established drive to succeed in applying his reforms.

The result of Hollingsworth's preöccupation is the death of Zenobia. Because his project is his only concern, he has failed to realize the effect of his actions on her, and so he suffers the consequences: he becomes completely consumed by his sense of guilt.

"The Birthmark" is another tale that presents a character whose project results in the death of a woman. It is the story of Aylmer, who is obsessed with making his wife perfect by removing her birthmark. His mistake amounts to a failure to realize that future happiness is only assured by accepting the present and living it as it is, not in changing the present so that it conforms to a preconceived notion of perfection.

Like other Hawthornian projectors, once Aylmer has formulated his project, he devotes himself completely to fulfilling it. He spends "the deepest thought"[49] on his project, which infects him to the extent that he even mutters his desire aloud in his sleep. To this point in the story "he had not been aware of the tyrannizing influence acquired by one idea over his mind",[50] but now his obsession becomes conscious. He will go to any lengths to achieve his goal, including denial of his recognition that nature, "while she amuses us with apparently working in the broadest sunshine, is yet severely careful to keep her own secrets, and in spite of her pretended openness, shows us nothing but results".[51] He remains determined to remove the birthmark despite his knowledge that nature "permits us, indeed, to mar, but seldom to mend, and...on no account to make".[52] In fact, he has become so obsessed that the sight of the birthmark on Georgiana's check renders him unable to respond to her great beauty of "soul" and of "sense". Nothing seems to matter to him any longer, not even his wife's health, so that he does not hesitate to give her the potion that proves to be fatal.

Aylmer's fate is similar to that of Hollingsworth. Because Aylmer's project has become too important to him, he fails to appreciate the virtues of the woman who lives him and inadvertently causes her death. Instead of accepting the present, as Hawthorne's healthy characters do, and working out his fate in accordance with it, "he failed to look beyond the shadowy scope of time, and living once for all in eternity, to find the perfect future in the present".[53]

Rappaccini ("Rappaccini's Daughter") is a second character who experiments with someone close to him, but before dealing specifically with him, it is necessary to indicate the importance of this tale to my argument. Nowhere else does Hawthorne show so extensively the evil effects on a number of characters of becoming too engrossed in a project as he does in "Rappaccini's Daughter". Most obviously, Rappaccini's dedication to making Beatrice able to defend herself causes him to produce a crippling change in his daughter. However, in this tale Hawthorne is not content to provide only one projector, as he does even in The Blithedale Romance and The Scarlet Letter. Baglioni is presented as being so motivated to destroy Rappaccini's reputation that he criminally misuses his position as a physician. Even Giovanni misapplies himself to determining the true nature of Beatrice'a ambiguous physical being. Her world is entirely populated with males who are malevolent because they either are, or become, too preoccupied with their projects. None of them view her as she truly is: a frail human being who yearns for love.

Rappaccini has decided long ago that the world is an evil place that could cause his daughter much suffering if she is powerless against it. So he has given her the power to destroy her enemies by causing her body to become poisonous. This last statement is made despite the fact that M. D. Uroff disagrees that Rappaccini acts deliberately. He claims that Beatrice is the victim of accidental exposure to her father's plants, and that it is as a result of this error that "the effect of these plants on his daughter has been disastrous ... her body has become permeated with poison".[54] But Rappaccini's surprise when she tells him she is "miserable" does not suggest that his purpose is to attempt a cure from the effects of the plant's poison. Rather, his response indicates that her poisonousness is, in his eyes, the desired result of his deliberate act.

His determination to succeed with his plan obsesses him, as supported by the fact that during the course of the story his actions are limited solely to those that serve his project. Principally, he is shown tending his flowers in the garden, but once he has decided to make Giovanni poisonous, he is also shown observing him studiously both inside the garden and on the street. Furthermore, his whole life is associated with the garden when Beatrice claims that it "is his world".[55]

The deleterious effects of this extreme dedication are figured in disease imagery and in the image of the shattered fountain. Rappaccini is "pale",[56] "emaciated, sallow, and sickly-looking",[57] "like a person of inferior health",[58] and is "affected with inward disease".[59] The marble fountain and Rappaccini are both described as being "shattered", with the fountain prefiguring Rappaccini's fate. Like the marble that surrounds the fountain, Rappaccini is rigid in maintaining his original project. But the marble is "so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the chaos of the remaining fragments".[60] Likewise, Rappaccini has degenerated to being merely a fragment of the scientist he is reputed to be by clinging so unreservedly to his fixed project. As Uroff has recognized, his approach to this 'experiment' on his daughter is at best very unscientific because he inverts normal scientific procedures by pursuing a particular, predetermined goal instead of being willing to accept an unexpected result.[61] The outcome for Rappaccini is that he ultimately stands "thunderstricken"[62] beside the ruined fountain as his project disintegrates at the pathetic and ironic death of his daughter.

Rappaccini evidently feels certain that simply making Beatrice poisonous has caused her to be forever able to defend herself from evil, illogically continuing to believe this even after it becomes obvious that her poisonousness is the source of the problem in her love affair with Giovanni. When he discovers this problem, Rappaccini's response is not to re-evaluate his position but instead to solve it by applying the simple expedient of making Giovanni as poisonous as she is. He fails to consider the possibility that Beatrice does not need to be as protected as he feels she must be.

By acting in this way, Rappaccini reveals the weakness of his position--his project does not take into account the present. He assumes that by predicating Beatrice's life on his past decision, her well-being will be assured. However, he fails to comprehend that Beatrice must make decisions in response to events that are more recent than his decision to make her poisonous, as well as to those that antedate it. By tying her physical being to his past decision, he has succeeded in isolating her from some harm, but in the process he has also ensured that Beatrice will be unable to respond naturally to Giovanni when he enters the garden.

The evidence of Rappaccini's past-orientation is therefore two-fold. First, he does not take into account the changing needs of his daughter. Second, his project restricts Beatrice's life unnaturally by predetermining that she will remain permanently isolated from normal human beings. Because he pays too much attention to his project, and not enough to his daughter's changing needs, he unwittingly causes her death. His fate is therefore like that of other projectors whose dedication to their projects results in death for someone else.

Another character in the same story, Baglioni, bears a striking resemblance to Rappaccini. He too has become fixated on the past by having become compulsively absorbed in attaining a particular goal--to establish himself as professionally superior to Rappaccini. His project has endured as long in his mind as Rappaccini's has in his, although Hawthorne indicates that Baglioni is not quite as absorbed.

That Baglioni is preoccupied by his desire to displace Rappaccini is supported by his denigrating remarks about his rival, and by his actions regarding both Giovanni and Beatrice. Although he admits that Rappaccini is "eminently skilled",[63] he claims that "there are certain grave objections to his professional character".[64] According to Baglioni, Rappaccini "cares infinitely more for science than for mankind",[65] his experiments are "infernal",[66] and he is "a vile empiric".[67] These statements are all true; however, the narrator gives Baglioni's statements a context by explaining that they may be regarded "with many grains of allowance" because "there was a professional warfare of long continuance between him and Dr. Rappaccini, in which the latter was generally thought to have gained the advantage".[68] It appears that Baglioni's statements are motivated by his long-standing professional jealousy rather than by love of truth.

Hawthorne shows the extent of Baglioni's past-orientation in the way he deals with Giovanni. Although Baglioni demonstrates some honest concern for Giovanni when he first discovers that Rappaccini is influencing the youth, he soon begins to ponder how he can use this information to disrupt Rappaccini's plans. He dwells more on the "too insufferable an impertinence" of Rappaccini's by which Rappaccini is able "to snatch the lad out of my own hands",[69] than he does on helping Giovanni. The real stimulus for his subsequent actions is not so much a desire to help solve Giovanni's present problem as his need to achieve his own, previously established goal.

His lack of concern for his actions is also shown by the fact that he does not consider the possibly adverse effects of his potion on Beatrice. Despite the uncertainty about his concoction (he can only tell Giovanni to "hopefully await the result",[70] he makes no comment, nor does the narrator attribute any to him, concerning its possible ill effects. He is so absorbed with the possibility of damaging Rappaccini's reputation that he fails to consider them, and in his preoccupation, he helps cause Beatrice's death. Beatrice is therefore as much a victim of Baglioni's past-orientation as she is of her father's. The result of this orientation for him is the dissipation of whatever triumph he would have felt at having ruined Rappaccini's project in the horror of his knowledge that he is partly responsible for Beatrice's death.

The third male character in the tale, Giovanni, seems to be different at the beginning of the tale from either Rappaccini or Baglioni. He does not have a project to which he is compulsively dedicated. In fact, as the story opens, his only apparent emotion is his feeling of homesickness. But he soon establishes his own project when he decides to test Beatrice, in order to determine if there were "those dreadful peculiarities in her physical nature which could not be supposed to exist without some corresponding monstrosity of soul".[71]

His assumption of a correspondence between her body and her spirit is the a priori condition that ensures his misjudgment of her spiritual nature. As a result of it, when he enters the garden, raging, to confront Beatrice with his newly-discovered poisonousness, he ignores her words to him, words that could have established for him her innocence, and accuses her of deliberately making him poisonous. In so doing, he precipitates his final tragedy, which is not so much that Rappaccini makes him poisonous, but that, had he continued to be open to the truth of Beatrice's words, he would not have misjudged her, and instead would have won her love.

Although his decision to test her is so recent as to appear to be an aspect of his present, the test is similar to the projects of Rappaccini and Baglioni in its rigidity. Like their projects, Giovanni's test provides him with a fixed premise that closes his mind to the evidence offered by Beatrice's subsequent words. As a result, his experiment fails, like theirs, and in giving Baglioni's antidote to Beatrice, he contributes to her death, as they do.

One of two remaining projectors is Chillingworth (The Scarlet Letter), who is ultimately as unsuccessful as any of those in "Rappaccini's Daughter". Like Baglioni he is compulsive, and like Rappaccini he is a 'scientist' who uses a human being as the subject of his 'research'. However, unlike them, he becomes past-burdened when he dedicates himself to revenge. Like the others, his eventual fate is proof that trying to regulate the ongoing present by establishing an inflexible resolve is doomed to failure. His attempt to avenge himself on his wife's lover reveals the truth, stated by Hawthorne in The Marble Faun, that "If we desire unexpected and unimaginable events, we should contrive an iron framework, such as we fancy may compel the future to take one inevitable shape; then comes in the unexpected, and shatters our he dedicates himself to "delving among Dimmesdale's principles, prying into his recollections, and probing every thing with a cautious touch, like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern".[76] The most dramatic increase in this intensity occurs when he discovers the 'A' on Dimmesdale's chest. This discovery is accompanied by expressions of wild joy, which indicate the extent to which Chillingworth's project has fixed itself in his mind. Now that he realizes that he can have "more intimate revenge than any mortal had ever wreaked upon an enemy",[77] he proceeds to become Dimmesdale's one trusted friend, so that Dimmesdale's admissions of guilt will fall on pitiless ears, and Chillingworth will be able to keep him in constant agony by means of his knowledge of the agony's source.

Hawthorne shows the adverse effects of dedicating oneself exclusively to revenge by describing Chillingworth as having become false, guarded and malevolent. He has become a "devil" by "devoting himself, for seven years, to the constant analysis of a heart full of torture, and deriving his enjoyment thence, and adding fuel to these fiery tortures which he analyzed and gloated over".[78] Finally, Hawthorne states that Chillingworth "had grown to exist only by this perpetual poison of the direst revenge!"[79] Therefore, when Hester urges him to give up his project because of its deleterious effects on him, he tells her that he cannot. For him, the events of the present are irrelevant except as they enable him to achieve his fixed desire for revenge.

He says that since her adultery, his course of action has been dictated to him, and calls it "fate" that he must continue to seek her lover's identity.

The final result is reflected in Chillingworth's ultimate fate. Once the object of his revenge is no longer accessible to him, "All his strength and energy--all his vital and intellectual force--seemed at once to desert him."[80] He is robbed of his life precisely for the same reason that he had become a demon--his perverse attachment to a fixed idea. "This unhappy man had made the very principle of his life to consist in the pursuit and systematic exercise of revenge; and when, by its completest triumph and consummation, that evil principle was left no further material to support it ..."[81] he dies.

In this way, Chillingworth's fate is like the fate of all other projectors in this chapter who, after establishing a fixed principle, allow it to determine the subsequent course of their lives. The projects of Digby, Ethan Brand, Hollingsworth, Aylmer, Rappaccini, Baglioni and Giovanni all rule them completely, as Chillingworth's dominates his, and in each case the projector's life is either blasted or snuffed out.

The fact that the above projectors all fail to realize their ambitions, and that they are described as either misguided or evil, does not mean that Hawthorne despaired of human improvement. While it is true that he considered real advancement to be difficult, he does present one character who manages the task without becoming a fiend. Owen Warland is as dedicated to his task of spiritualizing matter as any of the other projectors are to theirs, but he differs from all of them in one respect. His project evolves. Although most of the other projectors also have in common the fact that they adversely affect a character other than themselves, not all of them do. No evidence in "The Man of Adamant" indicates that Digby has abused Mary Goffe, the only other character in the tale. She is presented as merely "a convert to his preaching",[82] one who appears to be in love with him. Yet he too fails to accomplish his goal. But unlike all the others, Warland does not remain obsessed with his original project to the extent that he fails to learn from subsequent events.

After failing repeatedly, Warland realizes that his true ambition is to become aware of the nature of beauty itself. The achievement of the physical object, the mechanical butterfly, is no longer his desired goal, but has become secondary: the butterfly "is not now to me what it was when I beheld it in the day-dreams of my youth."[83] It is now far less important to him: "When the artist rose high enough to achieve the beautiful, the symbol by which he made it perceptible to mortal senses became of little value in his eyes while his spirit possessed itself in the enjoyment of the reality."[84] At some point after his third failure, Warland has realized that his desire is to achieve the continuous "inward enjoyment of the beautiful",[85] a realization that changes his goal from physical to spiritual. Unlike Rappaccini, who is unable to change his goal when he sees that his plan to protect Beatrice is disrupting her life, Warland is able to adapt his to his new awareness.

The nature of the difference between Warland's first goal and his second one is indicative of his shift from past- to present-orientation. The construction of a physical object is accomplished at one moment in time, a moment which, once experienced, becomes an aspect of the past. The physical object itself is subject to the vicissitudes of time, and when destroyed, as Warland's butterfly is destroyed, becomes merely a memory--something to be remembered, no longer to be experienced. However, the achievement of the idea of beauty is more eternal. It exists continually in the way that Warland lives his subsequent life.

It is a mark of Hawthorne's skill as an author that he could create nine characters like these projects, who are so similar in one way, without having them become merely copies of each other. His projectors are distinct and clearly defined, each one fitting the context of the tale in which he appears. The fact that they do have a similar orientation to the past merely typifies Hawthorne's interest in it, and their similar fates reflect the author's position on the place of the past in the flow of everyday life. Hawthorne's attitude is made even clearer by the way he treats other characters who are variously sinful and guilty, prideful, jealous, too fascinated with their family's background, or who try to deny a part of the past that they want to forget about. The next chapter deals with characters in these positions and tries to show that those who recover an appropriate sense of the present do not suffer the fate of projectors who remain obsessed by one idea or experiment.

NOTES

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, p. 57. Subsequently referred to as M.F.

[2] M.F., p. 118

[3] M.F., p. 54

[4] M.F., p. 54

[5] M.F., p. 54

[6] M.F., p. 22

[7] M.F., p. 54

[8] M.F., p. 57

[9] M.F., p. 57

[10] M.F., p. 57-8

[11] M.F., p. 61

[12] M.F., p. 61

[13] M.F., p. 61

[14] M.F., p. 62

[15] M.F., p. 14

[16] M.F., p. 15

[17] M.F., p. 129

[18] M.F., p. 140-41

[19] M.F., p. 204

[20] M.F., p. 123

[21] M.F., p. 312

[22] M.F., p. 216

[23] M.F., p. 216

[24] M.F., p. 185

[25] M.F., p. 295

[26] M.F., p. 214

[27] Hyatt H. Waggoner - Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Tales and Sketches, Toronto, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 166. Subsequently referred to as Waggoner.

[28] Waggoner, p. 169

[29] Waggoner, p. 167

[30] Waggoner, p. 167

[31] Waggoner, p. 171

[32] Waggoner, p. 171

[33] Waggoner, p. 168

[34] Waggoner, p. 170

[35] Waggoner, p. 301

[36] Waggoner, p. 309

[37] Waggoner, p. 308

[38] Waggoner, p. 310

[39] Waggoner, p. 306

[40] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance, p. 131. Sub-

sequently referred to as B.R.

[41] B.R., p. 55

[42] B.R., p. 43

[43] B.R., p. 56

[44] B.R., p. 133

[45] B.R., p. 36

[46] B.R., p. 57

[47] B.R., p. 70

[48] B.R., p. 218

[49] Waggoner, p. 207

[50] Waggoner, p. 207

[51] Waggoner, p. 208

[52] Waggoner, p. 208-209

[53] Waggoner, p. 221

[54] M. D. Uroff, "The Doctors in 'Rappaccini's Daughter'", Nineteenth Century Fiction, p. 65. Subsequently referred to as Uroff.

[55] Waggoner, p. 284

[56] Waggoner, p. 297

[57] Waggoner, p. 270

[58] Waggoner, p. 280

[59] Waggoner, p. 271

[60] Waggoner, p. 269

61 Uroff, p. 66

62 Waggoner, p. 299

63 Waggoner, p. 273

64 Waggoner, p. 273

65 Waggoner, p. 274

66 Waggoner, p. 281

67 Waggoner, p. 291

68 Waggoner, p. 274

69 Waggoner, p. 281

70 Waggoner, p. 291

71 Waggoner, p. 292

72 M.F., p. 199

73 S.L., p. 57

74 S.L., p. 123

75 S.L., p. 168

76 S.L., p. 118

77 S.L., p. 133

78 S.L., p. 163

79 S.L., p. 165

80 S.L., p. 250

81 S.L., p. 250

82 Waggoner, p. 169

[83] Waggoner, p. 264

[84] Waggoner, p. 267

[85] Waggoner, p. 252

CHAPTER IV

PAST ORIENTED CHARACTERS: OTHERS

Projectors are not the only characters who concentrate too much on the past. At least nine other characters, most of them major, also become oriented to the past. Their orientations are the result of diverse states of mind, among which are fascination with one's familial past, guilt and jealousy. Although most of these characters are obsessive, like the characters included in the preceding chapter, they are more passive than the projectors, who actively pursue a goal. Instead of being totally consumed by one driving ambition, characters like Miriam (The Marble Faun), Zenobia (The Blithedale Romance) and Hester (The Scarlet Letter) try to escape a past that has become oppressive to them. Others cannot rid themselves of various preoccupations. For example, Roderick Elliston ("Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent"), has trouble ridding himself of his jealousy; Holgrave (The Blithedale Romance) is too engrossed by the workings of an ancient curse placed by one of his ancestors on another family; and Hepzibah and Clifford (also of The Blithedale Romance) are tormented, in different ways, by the injustice done years ago to Clifford.

In each of three of Hawthorne's novels, one major femals character tries unsuccessfully to escape or to deny the past. Zenobia, the principal character in The Blithedale Romance, tries to leave her past behind by going to Blithedale; Hester, the major protagonist in The Scarlet Letter, attempts to deny the consequences of having committed adultery. And Miriam, who is the most important female figure in The Marble Faun, tries to forget the murder of the model. In all three cases their past-orientation is measured by the extent to which they feel impelled to dissociate themselves from the past.

Zenobia mistakenly feels that the past can be left behind merely by changing her address and assuming another name. However, the past is not left behind, despite her attempts to do so, and despite her brave statement to the other Blithedale inhabitants that they can all "begin our new life from daybreak."[1] Although her past is a mystery to her acquaintances, nonetheless her attempts to escape from its destructive influence are futile.

Two aspects of the past eventually torment her beyond endurance. The first is the arrival of Priscilla, who is, unknown to Zenobia, her half-sister. Zenobia has attempted to sever her ties with her previous life, but Priscilla's unexpected appearance shows that she has not been completely successful. Their father has discovered that Zenobia is his first daughter and sends his younger daughter to her in the hope that Zenobia would treat her kindly. Instead of becoming friends, Priscilla and Zenobia become rivals (at least in Zenobia's eyes) for the affection of Hollingsworth. The ultimate result of Priscilla's entrance into Zenobia's life is that Hollingsworth eventually chooses Priscilla over Zenobia, which drives Zenobia to commit suicide.

The second aspect of her previous life that haunts her is her involvement with Westervelt. Although she feels she has left him behind, together with her former affection for him, he reappears in her life at Blithedale. The reason that he pursues her is never made clear by Hawthorne, but the evidence of the story is that Westervelt intends to use her to obtain the services of Priscilla as his "veiled lady". The results of her apparent agreement to help him do not endear her to Hollingsworth. On the contrary, as a result of bringing Priscilla to town, she inadvertently puts him in a position where he feels constrained to rescue the girl from Westervelt's ambiguously evil influence. Again Zenobia's past throws its blighting influence over her present life.

Hawthorne illustrates Zenobia's inability to escape the past by having her wear an exotic flower every day, although one might logically question how she manages to have one at hand in the middle of a New England winter. It is, she says, the "one relic"[2] of her former existence, and expresses her true nature, without which she "had not been Zenobia".[3] By associating her so closely with an emblem of her past, Hawthorne reminds the reader that the past haunts her despite her talk about beginning life anew at Blithedale.

In the final analysis, her fate is to fail to see any meaning in her present life or in her future, and to resign herself, as most suicides do, to a hopeless vision of what has already transpired.

The central fact that Zenobia's relationship to Westervelt is not made sufficiently clear helps to obscure the conclusion of the novel. While her dark past is hinted at and referred to repeatedly in the novel, its relevance is never made clear enough either to provide an adequate rationale for her strange submissiveness to Westervelt, or to indicate the true significance of the "veiled lady" phenomenon. Hawthorne seems to have relied too heavily, in this instance, on the native ambiguity of the Romance because by failing to specify the pertinent details of Zenobia's background, he does not make adequately clear her motivation for the actions she takes. Why, for example, does she decide to join the Blithedale experiment--was she trying to escape Westervelt? How does she know so much about the veiled lady--from public knowledge of the phenomenon or because she had in fact been the mysterious lady herself? What hold could Westervelt have on her--the authority of a husband or the power of a blackmailer? Hawthorne answers none of these questions. Because Zenobia is such a central character, and because her association with Westervelt plays such a critical role both in establishing her character and in her decision to take Priscilla away from Blithedale, Hawthorne's failure to provide adequate information about Zenobia's past causes her to appear less tragic than she needs to appear at the end, and leaves too vague Westervelt's crucial interference.

Unlike Zenobia, Hester does not appear to deny the past during most of The Scarlet Letter--from the time that she leaves the prison, she seems to accept, even to flaunt, the community's judgment of her. For example, she embroiders the 'A' in an ornate style on her clothes and dresses Pearl so that she looks like the letter in human form. However, Hester indicates four times that within herself she has not completely accepted that her adultery is utterly wrong, as the ending indicates she should have. First, she tries to convince Dimmesdale that they can escape their sense of shame; second, and in conjunction with the first, she attempts to throw away the emblem of her sin, the scarlet letter; third, she states that their adultery was justified; and fourth, she actually leaves the settlement. In turn, therefore, she twice denies the past outright, then denies the true importance that the past must have in her present life, and last runs away from it.

Appropriately, her statements about leaving behind the past and sin are made in the forest, the morally ambiguous area beyond the limits of civilization. Here, when Dimmesdale denigrates himself, she tells him that "Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past. Your present life is not less holy, in very truth, than it seems in people's eyes".[4] Later, she again states that their sin is behind them when he seems to be on the verge of accepting the possibility that she speaks the truth: "The past is gone! Wherefore should we linger upon it now?"[5] Like Zenobia, who claims that the residents of Blithedale can begin their lives over again at daybreak, Hester implores Dimmesdale to leave behind his "seven years' weight of misery".[6]

Immediately after stating that the past has no relevance to their present life, she takes off the scarlet letter and flings it away. This act testifies to the fact that although she has learned from shame, despair and solitude, and although she has been strenghtened by them, they have "taught her much amiss".[7] How much amiss is revealed in this attempt to rid herself of the futility of trying to leave the past behind. Pearl obeys her mother only when Hester retrieves the letter and replaces it on her dress. Then Pearl says, "'Now thou art my mother indeed!'"[8] The child is correct; Hester cannot be completely herself without her sinful past because it is necessary to the full meaning of present events. Hester is not herself without her past, a fact that she does not yet recognize.

Further, this scene also reveals that, not only does she try to deny her past at this point, but that since her adultery she has consistently tried to escape the full implications of the past. Because she still clings to the idea that their act was justificable, at least in part--"What we did had a consecration of its own"[9] --she does not accept completely that she is sinful. Although she undeniably does feel torment, it is largely the result of her public ignominy to which she is subjected by "the undying, the ever-active sentence of the Puritan tribunal,"[10] not the internally generated anguish caused by the complete recognition of having sinned. Previous to this time she has not completely accepted her guilt, despite appearing to do so, and as a result of this partial denial, the past has not provided her with a sufficient moral guide. Therefore, since the time of her adultery, she has "wandered, without rule of guidance, in a moral wilderness;"[11] as well, "The world's law was no law for her mind".[12] Whereas Hawthorne's healthy characters accept the lessons of the past, seven years after Hester's adultery Hawthorne says of her that "The scarlet letter had not done its office."[13]

However, Hester eventually does realize that she cannot deny or escape from her past. Her first intimation of this truth occurs as she stands by the scaffold during Dimmesdale's election sermon: "There was a sense within her...that her whole orb of life, both before and after, was connected with this spot, as with the one point that gave it unity."[14] She must integrate the past with the present by accepting her sinfulness as a fact of her existence, and, by being penitent, to use the lesson it teaches in her present life. Only in this way will the past cease to torment her.

Despite this realization, Hester makes one last attempt to deny the past, which is her departure from the settlement. It turns out to be a futile flight. By leaving, she tries to leave behind her adultery and her shame for it; however, she finds that, over the course of years, her life is not as meaningful for her as it had been when she had worn the symbol of her shame, so she returns in order to wear the letter permanently. At this point, at which she feels complete penitence for having sinned, she is paradoxically freed from her public torment. The reason is that for the settlers the meaning of the letter has been changed. Earlier in the novel, she says that she will be worthy of taking off the scarlet letter when its meaning is transformed.[15] Now the letter had become universally accepted as a mark of "awe" and "reverence",[16] as well as of sorrow. It is no longer a token of "scorn and bitterness"[17] associated with her years-old adultery but it is symbolic of her continuing willingness to help others, because Hester now dedicates herself wholeheartedly to doing good. Having returned to the settlement, she realizes that her life is now "more real"[18] for her because only here are her past, present and future properly joined: "Here had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence."[19] Hester is no longer tormented by her past, but she uses it to live a useful life dedicated to helping others.

Like Donatello, whom Hawthorne also leaves as a penitent, Hester is left in a position in which she achieves as much happiness as her situation allows. Although her life is at best sombre, she is now able to envisage hopefully, for the first time, a future in which some new truth will "establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness."[20] In this hopefulness, and in her new-found ability to council others, she is finally able to accept her past, herself, and her position in society.

The last character who attempts to deny the past is Miriam

(The Marble Faun). Like Hester, she eventually achieves a qualified kind of happiness after she becomes able to accept her sinful past, and thereby to cease being obsessed by it. When the reader first meets Miriam, she is already burdened by her memories of her prior relations with the model. She is so troubled by them that at one point she nearly reveals her problems to Kenyon, despite his apparent lack of sympathy. After the murder of the model, her burden increases. This is illustrated by her attempts to forget her complicity in his death, and by her anguished realization that Donatello does not appear to love her as she now loves him. Subsequently, her development during the course of the novel is limited to her shift from attempting to deny these aspects of her past (including the murder), to accepting them as necessary to her present. Once she does this, she no longer broods ineffectually over her past.

However, her acceptance occurs only near the book's conclusion. During most of the story she struggles to separate her present from her past. She expresses a wish to forget how old she is, and to "forget one day of all my life."[21] As well, there is "an ambiguity about this young lady"[22] that prevents even her close friends Hilda and Kenyon from knowing much about her background. As befits two characters who eventually reject the past, they accept her as she appears without questioning her personal history. She has apparently even chosen Rome deliberately, as well as the occupation of painter, for the purposes of disguising her past: "Nowhere else but in Rome, and as an artist, could she hold a place in society without giving some clue to her past life."[23]

Like Zenobia (The Blithedale Romance), Miriam has adopted a different name, thus adding to the mystery that surrounds her. However, the appearance of the model in the catacombs, like a spirit from the past, floods her mind with memories of some evil act in which they were both involved. Although her friends do not discover her real name until much later, the model knows that it connects her with "one of the most dreadful and mysterious events that have occurred within the present century!"[24]

It is worthwhile noting here that, in creating both Miriam and Zenobia, Hawthorne fails to provide adequate motivation for their actions. In Miriam's case, the above quotation, although vague, is Hawthorne's most specific reference to her past. For him to account for Miriam's personality and her position in Rome as being the result simply of unknown, undefined events is inadequate, and leaves unanswered questions about both the model's importance to her and her own part in those "events". Questions of this importance should be answered for the reader, who is asked to feel sympathy for Miriam. But a critical reader cannot respond to her appropriately without more specific knowledge of her involvement. The same situation exists in Zenobia's case. As with Miriam, the importance to her of a mysterious figure in this case Westervelt, is not made sufficiently clear, so that the reader has little reason to feel sympathy for Zenobia when she takes Priscilla to Westervelt. As a result, her eventual death does not cause the reaction that it should, and one's reaction to Hollingsworth is not as condemning as Hawthorne apparently intends. In dealing with both these characters, Hawthorne seems to have relied too much on the inherent mystery of romance. Here ambiguity reduces the effectiveness of his characterization of two important female characters.

However, returning to Miriam and her relationship to the past: Despite the model's sudden reappearance, an event which foreshadows the fruitlessness of attempting to deny the past, the first half of the novel contains at least four examples of her attempts to leave the past behind. First, apparently because she is so burdened by her previous experience involving the model, and because she wants to escape it so much, she perceives sculpture as an art that oppresses its viewers with the past. She feels that sculpture lasts too long and that it therefore represents the dead weight of the past: "it will be a fresher and better world, when it flings off this great burden of stony memories, which the ages have deemed it a piety to heap upon its back."[25] As an interjection here, it is valuable to note that this attitude to the past is quite similar to Holgrave's expressed position in The House of the Seven Gables. He feels that old houses should be torn down so that the past does not place too great a burden on the present. However, whereas he remains in the old Pyncheon house to witness the effects of the curse, Miriam has deliberately tried to run away from her past by coming to Rome. In the second of Miriam's attempts to leave the past behind, she supports the idea of transience against that of permanence because implicit in transience is the assumption that the past can be left behind. On this subject she asks Hilda if she would "sacrifice this greatest mortal consolation, which we derive from the transitoriness of all things--from the right of saying, in every conjucture, 'This, too, will pass away' ..."[26] Fourth, she encourages Donatello to pretend that the murder had never happened. She says that, "The deed has done its office, and has no existence any more,"[27] then urges him ~~to~~ "forget it all!"[28] and to think of their love as a new law that will erase their responsibility for their past actions. The past, however, cannot be forgotten by mere wishes of exhortations. Attempting to forget it only ensures that it will dominate the present. Miriam is therefore caught in statements, both before and after the murder, which reveal that her awareness of the past pervades her consciousness. The first one occurs prior to the murder. As she and Donatello walk in the gardens of the Borghese villa, she tells him that she is a girl who is "burdened with a doom that she tells to none."[29]

Her conception of fate is appropriate to one who has "resigned herself to the thralldom in which [the model] held her".[30] For her, life is predestined: "'As these busts in the block of marble', thought Miriam, 'so does our individual fate exist in the limestone of time. We fancy that we carve it out; but its ultimate shape is prior to all our action.'"[31] In a third place, she insists that "there is a great evil hanging over me! I know it; I see it in the sky; I feel it in the air!"[32] Later, the past engulfs Miriam unexpedtedly in the middle of a rendition of "Hail, Columbia" when the strain of suppressing the past becomes too great and her voice "seemed to pervade the whole choir of other voices"[33] rather than succumb to an outright admission of her pain. "There had long been an impulse upon her--amounting, at last, to a necessity--to shriek aloud; but she had struggled against it, till the thunderous anthem gave her an opportunity to relieve her heart by a great cry."[34] Further, after the murder, Miriam's past-orientation is revealed by her desire to walk past Pompey's forum in order to feel the fanciful bond that she senses between themselves and the ancient murderers of Caesar. Last, when she encounters Kenyon at Monte Beni, her mind has become crippled with its burden of memory: "'My mind is not active any longer,' answered Miriam, in a cold, indifferent tone. 'It deals with one thought and no more. One recollection paralyzes it.'"[35]

Miriam's past-orientation is also established for the reader by one of Hawthorne's direct comments, a statement that indicates the extent of her preoccupation. The fact that Miriam sees the model's features in the face of the dead Capuchin is "a symbol, perhaps, of the deadly iteration with which she was doomed to behold the image of her crime reflected back upon her in a thousand ways, and coverting the great, calm face of Nature, in the whole, and in its innumerable details, into a manifold reminiscence of that one dead visage".[36] At this point, Miriam's life is reduced to "that state ot feeling which is experienced oftenest at Rome. It is a vague sense of ponderous remembrances; a perception of such weight and density in a bygone life, of which this spot was the center, that the present moment is pressed down or crowded out, and our individual affairs and interests are but half as real here as elsewhere".[37]

In the first half of the novel, the only situation in which Miriam is able to enjoy the present without being compulsively aware of the past consits of a few fleeting moments in the Borghese villa when Donatello invites her to dance. However, even here she cannot entirely abandon herself to the enjoyment of the present, even though she is briefly able to forget about the model. Her dancing still has an "artful beauty" about it, as if she is responding to the music by dancing steps she is remembering. Donatello's dancing, on the other hand, is truly spontaneous, and therefore contains an element of the grotesque that indicates a completely intuitive response to the music. In this same scene, Miriam cannot remain engrossed in the music for long, which prompts Donatello to warn her that if they do not continue dancing, they will lose their sense of the moment's exhileration and revert to being as they were yesterday.

Miriam remains dominated by her awareness of past events until, after realizing her love for Donatello, she is driven to determine his feelings for her. She makes a desperate pilgrimage to Donatello's home in the Apennines, where, when Kenyon first meets her, she appears frail and is "ill enough...to die, unless some change speedily occurs".[38] The disease is the result of her obsessive fear that she is "an object of horror in Donatello'w sight".[39] She has felt this fear since the day after the murder when he had failed to respond to her declaration of love. Combined with her ill-repressed feelings about her previous experiences with the model, Miriam's compulsive desire to discover why Donatello had rejected her love accounts for her weakened physical condition.

After Kenyon gives her some hope that Donatello loves her, she is able to act positively toward securing his affection, instead of brooding over his previous rejection of her. This action consists of meeting the two of them at the square in Perugia, where Donatello confesses his love for her. Once their mutual love is established in this way, she loses her obsession with the past, thereby reducing its influence to the proper level where it merely informs the present. By dedicating herself to Donatello, she turns to face the future and, although she remains aware of her part in the fatal act, her love for Donatello keeps her from remembering it too much.

The happiness that Miriam achieves is at best sombre, but she at least has the comfort of knowing that she is now following the correct course and can look forward to the time when Donatello is released from prison. So she remains in Rome, doing penance for her past sin, in order to lead Donatello to "a higher innocence than that from which he fell".[40]

Miriam's final act, sending the ancient Etruscan bracelet to Hilda, becomes significant when the reader considers the different temporal orientations of the two characters. Miriam has achieved a proper awareness of both past and present after becoming sinful, while Hilda has retained her present-only orientation by rejecting the possibility that sin can be educative. The old bracelet, symbolic of the past, can therefore be seen as a gift whose purpose is to remind Hilda that the past is necessary to human happiness. Unfortunately, Hilda ignores her friend's warning and so she remains a sinless goddess, an incomplete human being in a postlapsarian world. In her perfection, she receives merely reverence from Kenyon, whereas Miriam, in her sinfulness, attains the greatest Hawthornian virtue, love.

Unlike stronger characters such as Zenobia, Hester and Miriam, Roderick Elliston is so overwhelmed by his awareness of the past that he cannot even attempt to repress it. The particular aspect of the past that engulfs him is a feeling of jealousy that he began to feel more than four years prior to the opening of the story. From what Hawthorne tells the reader of antecedent events, Elliston's whole existence has deteriorated since the inception of his jealousy. He has estranged his wife, after which he has been driven to discover other sinful people like himself. As the story begins, he is concerned only with this dominant emotion, failing to acknowledge present events except insofar as they concern his jealousy. The result is that, as long as he broods over his previous actions, like those that drove his wife from him, the present continues to have little meaning for him.

The "disease"[41] he suffers from proves unamenable to cure until Rosina, his wife and agency of redemption, reenters his life. She causes him to forget about his jealousy by providing him anew with "hope and unselfish love",[42] which makes his present life more meaningful. As soon as he realizes she has returned, he immediately forgets his preoccupation and asks for her forgiveness, an act in which he is born again--like the fountain in the garden which is "born at every moment".[43] His action affirms what his wife later states, that "the past, dismal as it seems, shall fling no gloom upon the future".[44]

In The House of the Seven Gables Hawthorne states more directly his interest in the relationship between the past and the present than he does in "Egotism". Even The Marble Faun, with its juxtaposition of the present with ancient history and art, does not contain as clear a statement of his interest as this novel does. Hawthorne begins in the preface with the assertion that the novel consists of "the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us".[45] Later, in the novel itself, he calls his story "our history of retribution for the sin of long ago".[46] Two sins, committed before the story opens, influence the lives of three major characters destructively. The first of these sins is the original Pyncheon's false accusation of Matthew Maule, which long ago had resulted in Maule's execution. The second one, similar to the first, is committed by a later Pyncheon, Judge Pyncheon, who falsely accuses his cousin Clifford of murder. The consequences of these sins are revealed throughout most of the novel in the lives of Holgrave, Clifford and Hepzibah. Holgrave, a Maule, has become too fascinated with the history of his family's persecution at the hands of the Pyncheons so that he feels oppressed by that aspect of the past, and does not take an active part in the events unfolding around him. Clifford's life is almost destroyed by the judge's false accusation of thirty years ago because it helped to send him to prison. As a result of his imprisonment, his sister, Hepzibah, has remained a loveless spinster in order to take care of him once he is released. However, by the end of the novel, the past has ceased to dominate their lives and they begin to experience some happiness as they prepare to leave for their new home.

During the first part of the novel, Holgrave states repeatedly that the past must be immediately torn down because he resents the fact that it burdens his present life. As a result, he exclaims, "'Shall we never, never get rid of this Past?'"[47] It is like a "'giant's dead body,'" and as things stand, he feels that "'the case is just as if a young giant were compelled to waste all his strength in carrying about the corpse of the old giant, his grandfather, who died a long while ago.'"[48] One of the ways to remedy this situation, he feels, is to make certain that each generation builds its own residences. He says that this one change, "comparatively unimportant in itself, would imply almost every reform which society is now suffering for'"[49]

Paradoxically, the particular house that he declaims against is the one in which he lives, the old Pyncheon house. While it is "'expressive of that odicus and abominable Past'" in which his ancestors, the Maules, had been unjustly treated by the Pyncheons, it nonetheless fascinates him. This is apparently the reason that Holgrave's reformist theory centres on ridding the present of the past's influence, which he considers to be oppressive. Yet he allows the past, represented by the curse and the old house, to control the direction of his life. He not only lives in the old house where the curse first afflicted a Pyncheon, but he dedicates himself to witnessing the effects of the curse and he even writes a story about one of the historical Pyncheons, Alice Pyncheon. This paradox is best explained by keeping in mind that Holgrave does not actually deny the past, although he makes empty statements on the subject--he does not act on these pronouncements except indirectly in his later attempts to help explain the death of Judge Pyncheon.

In the first part of the novel, he does not try to influence the course of events, but feels instead that his duty consists only in passively noting how the curse of the Maules afflicts the Pyncheons. He thinks that he is intended "to look on, to analyze, to explain matters to myself, and to comprehend the drama [of the curse] ..."[50] At this point, he does not feel any need to influence present events. However, there is hope that he will become more involved in the present in that he is not convinced of the truth of his own statements. "He could talk sagely about the world's old age, but never actually believed what he said ..."[51] He eventually does involve himself in the events going on around him, although at first his involvement is limited to refraining from acting. By resisting the temptation to take advantage of Phoebe when she is hypnotized, he refuses to take the revenge on the Pyncheons that an earlier Maule had taken by enslaving the mind of Alice Pyncheon. Instead, he deliberately releases her from his spell. In this way, he rejects that aspect of the past that has kept him in the house of the seven gables, and denies his family's traditional desire for revenge by respecting the life of a living human being.

Later in the same scene his statements show his increasing involvement in present events. He finds, for the first time, that the old house not only reminds him of the past, as it had previously, but also has acquired a sense of newness. As he and Phoebe sit in the garden, he compares the house, "which has positively oppressed my breath with its smell of decaying timber", to the freshness of "a bower in Eden".[52] During this scene, he also becomes aware of "How young [the world] is, too, with nothing really rotten or age-worn in it!"[53] Last, he feels the freshness of the dew fall on his heart "and [give] it youth again, and sympathy with the eternal youth of nature".[54]

By the end of the novel, Holgrave has become very involved in the events of the present. He acts positively toward helping Hepzibah and Clifford in their distress by sketching a picture of the body of Judge Pyncheon as "a point of evndence that may be useful to Clifford"[55] in proving that he did not kill the judge. Holgrave also removes suspicion from Clifford by not making public the judge's death until after Hepzibah and he return home. Later in the same scene, he expresses the effect of Phoebe's return on him in the terms of his heightened awareness of the present. He says that she has roused him from brooding over the guilt and retribution suggested to him by the judge's corpse, by reminding him of "the gentle current of everyday affairs".[56] Finally, he is able to perceive the proper place of the past in the events of the present: instead of wishing to deny the past as he had when he had felt oppressed by it, he now can accept that "permanence [is] essential to the happiness of any one moment"[57] without feeling that the past burdens the present excessively. He leaves the old Pyncheon house with memories of his family's past that no longer preoccupy or torment him, and begins a new life with Phoebe.

Unlike Holgrave, who is at least able to rail against the past that torments him, Clifford is crushed by his unjust imprisonment and by his thirty years in jail. He is a helpless invalid whose mind cannot adequately focus on present events because it is possessed by images from his past. Chief among these images are memories of his cousin Jaffrey who had stolen his inheritance and who had had him sent to jail. It is Jaffrey's "dark face"[58] that Clifford perceives in the fountain, and which is "a stern and dreadful shape that typified his fate".[59]

Clifford comes home out of the "remote and dusky"[60] past but cannot at first free himself of its oppressiveness. On his first morning at home, his progress to the breakfast table is painfully slow because he is unable to focus attention on his present actions. As he walks downstairs to breakfast he repeatedly pauses: "Each time, the delay seems to be without purpose, but rather from a forgetfulness of the purpose which had set him in motion..."[61] He remains preoccupied to the extent that his mind wanders from perceptions of the kitchen scene to imagining that he is back in prison, "which had stereotyped itself into his senses".[62] For example, he thinks that breakmust must be a dream that hides the stone walls of his prison. Even though he is physically in the kitchen, he cannot make it real to himself because, "continually, as we may express it, he faded away out of his place".[63] He had lost the ability "to deal with unaccustomed things, and to keep up with the swiftness of the passing moment".[64] He is only able to perceive the present as if it were the past: he focusses on ancient objects such as "the antique fashions of the street"[65] and the "old rumbling and jolting carts".[66] He also likes the noise of the scissor-grinder's wheel because "its charm lay chiefly in the past".[67]

Because Clifford has been heavily oppressed by the injustice done to him, his view of life has become narrowed: "With a mysterious and terrible Past, which had annihilated his memory, and a blank Future before him, he had only this visionary and impalpable Now, which, if you once look closely at it, is nothing".[68] The memory of his conviction and imprisonment so dominates his life at this point that other memories, together with present events, and therefore the future, have little meaning for him except when they remind him of these particular events in his past life.

During the course of the story, Clifford gradually emerges from his preoccupation with the past by becoming more involved in present events. For example, he becomes capable of appreciating poetry, although only fitfully and at the expense of becoming gloomy when he realizes that he can no longer feel the glow of sympathetic understanding. He also recovers his sense of appreciation for flowers as he "slowly revived from the chill torpor of his life".[69]

The weight of the past is finally lifted from his shoulders at the death of the Judge, because now Clifford does not need to fear that Jaffrey will persecute him further. However, Clifford's first reaction to being freed from his burden is to flee from the old house and to leave Jaffrey's body (the defunct nightmare"[70]) behind. But by running away from the house, he is leaving behind more than just that aspect of the past that had tormented him. Inadvertently, he is also turning his back on the only happy memories he has, an action that he begins to realize is an error before he leaves the train on which he and Hepzibah have left town. This is revealed in his conversation with the gentleman passenger, in which he claims that: "'while we fancy ourselves going straight forward, and attaining at every step, an entirely new state of affairs, we do actually return to something long ago tried and abandoned, but which we now find etherealized, refined, and perfected to its ideal.'"[71] Insofar as the train trip is a flight from his entire past, Clifford's actions during their flight "not a little resembled the exhilaration of wine. Or, it might more fancifully be compared to a joyous piece of music, played with wild vivacity, but upon a disordered instrument".[72] The enjoyment that Clifford derives from the scene passing by outside the train window is fleeting, like the brief exhilaration of wine, because he has not yet related his previous experience properly to his present life.

Yet, the train trip is valuable to him because it allows him to become involved in the present without feeling tormented by his past. His conversation on the train is an example--he becomes so completely involved in it that he does not care whether people consider him mad. The fact that he is able to express himself fully again means that he no longer feels appalled by his memories: "For the first time in thirty years, my thoughts gush up and find words ready for them. I must talk, and I will!"[73]

Meaningful involvement in the present must be accompanied by an acceptance of the past. Clifford is therefore glad when Hepzibah brings him home, even if the house is "dreary",[74] and still contains the Judge's body. In his dislike of the old house, he is like Holgrave who, because he feels the burden of the past, dislikes old houses. However, the past no longer threatens Clifford as it had previously done, and by returning, he recovers his proper place in the present. He discovers that Phoebe has come back, and that he has inherited, along with Hepzibah, the Pyncheon fortune. Shortly afterward, he leaves the house of the seven gables once more, but in doing so this time, he does not deny the past. As Hawthorne indicates in the concluding chapter, although in fact "no great mistake ... is ever really set right",[75] it is important "for the sufferer to pass on, and leave what he once thought is irreparable ruin far behind him".[76] The only aspect of his previous existence that does not go with him to their new home is his sense of torment.

Considering the extent of the wrong done to him, Clifford achieves a significant happiness. "He never, it is true, attained to nearly the full measure of what might have been his faculties. But he recovered enough of them partially to light up his character, to display some outline of the marvellous grace that was abortive in it, and to make him the object of no less deep, although melancholy interest than heretofore. He was evidently happy".[77] This is a fate appropriate a character who achieves a proper awareness of past and present events.

Hepzibah's situation is similar to Clifford's in that she too is burdened by the effects of his unjust imprisonment. She has not been able to develop normally, but has remained alone in the old house in order to be able to take care of Clifford when he is released. Hawthorne's description of her, his comments on her actions and character, and his contrast of her to both Phoebe and Clifford (during his and Hepzibah's attempt to flee from the house), combine to generate the image of a woman who is overcome, for most of the novel, by her oppressive awareness of her brother's unjust imprisonment.

Hawthorne first associates Hepzibah with the past by describing her as an elderly woman whose dresses are so old they smell of the past, and as a semi-recluse who lives in her family's ancient mansion surrounded by reminders of the past. As previously indicated, the Pyncheon family has been afflicted by a curse ever since the original Pyncheon unjustly wrenched the land on which the house was built from Matthew Maule, the rightful owner. The house has retained ever since "the shadows of [these] gloomy events".[78] Merely by living in this environment for as long as she has, Hepzibah's mind has imbibed its gloom.

By the time that Clifford returns home, after Hepzibah has waited thirty years for him, she even considers herself to be a relic left over from the past. For example, she resents having to open the cent shop because she considers herself a lady in an old-fashioned sense: "I was born a lady, and have always lived one; no matter in what narrowness of means, always a lady!"[79]

And although she suspects that being a lady of gentility is part of the past, she cannot let go of her pretentions and admit that she is merely the keeper of a cent shop. She resents the customers who do not recognize her "sterling gentility"[80] and she cannot bring herself to accept money from Holgrave because she wants to remain as she once was for a few minutes more. She wishes to avoid the necessities of the present represented by the shop: "I never can go through with it! Never, never, never! I wish I were dead, and in the old family tomb, with all my forefathers!"[81]

Although Hepzibah does gather enough courage to open her little business, she proves to be unable to meet the demands it imposes on her. The reason is largely that her attention to the shop is interrupted by reveries on the past. For instance, her response to making her first sale is to feel that the "structure of ancient aristocracy has been demolished"[82] by her acceptance of money from a customer. Although she briefly fantasizes that her cent-shop has completely dissociated her from her past, she soon discovers that the "excitement"[83] she feels at first is temporary and cannot guard against the return of "the despondency of her whole life".[84] As well, because Clifford is coming home, she is preoccupied with "that region of the Past whence her only guest [Clifford] might be expected to arrive".[85]

The contrast between Hepzibah and Phoebe also establishes that Hepzibah's outlook is past-dominated. She represents the "old Gentility",[86] while Phoebe is typical of a "new Plebianism"[87] that takes a more active role in daily and domestic life. While Phoebe is "bright, cheerful and efficient"[88] in preparing breakfast and in tending the shop, Hepzibah spends time reflecting on Clifford's imprisonment, and on the legendary treasure that, if it is ever found, would enable her to cease the clangor of the hated shop bell forever. Phoebe's response to these recollections of Hepzibah's concerning ancient wealth is to dismiss them as being much less important than the present ringing of the bell, which she answers. Unlike Phoebe's mind, which is active, brisk and spontaneous, Hepzibah's awareness consists merely of "her deeply cherished and ridiculous consciousness of long descent, her shadowy claims to princely territory, and in the way of accomplishment, her recollections ...."[89]

The extent of Hepzibah's preoccupation with the past is partially measured by the fact that she remains past-oriented despite the unpleasantness of her most intense memories. Clifford's imprisonment has cost her thirty years of pain, yet she ponders over it so long that she begins to "bewilder herself with these fantasies of the old time".[90] Even Uncle Venner, the cheery old man who is much older than Hepzibah, is more aware of, and involved in, the present. He at least forages along Pyncheon street for odd jobs, while Hepzibah remains in her old house where she does not "take a due part in the bustling world".[91] She can only admire, from a distance, the "real actors in life's stirring scenes;"[92] she is not one of them.

This sense of separation between Hepzibah and the events of the present is increased by her typical responses to the problems she encounters. Her most frequent method of dealing with difficulties is to try to avoid them. Although she tries to deal with her present financial problems by opening the cent shop, it is repugnant to her, and Hawthorne indicates that the venture would probably have failed if Phoebe had not run it. Even when Holgrave suggests to her the advantages of joining the mainstream of the working world, she rejects his comforting words, claiming that his ideas are new ones and as such she cannot adapt to them. Further, when the Judge threatens to have Clifford committed to an asylum unless he reveals where the treasure is located, she seeks "Anything that would take her out of the grievous present".[93] Therefore, as she ascends the stairs to his room, she fantasizes about "the rustle of dead people's garments", and "pale visages awaiting her on the landing place above".[94]

Two more of Hepzibah's actions show her past-orientation. The first one is her attempt to go to church with Clifford, which fails even before they reach the street. Having been so secluded from the world, and having had their natural development interrupted so long by Clifford's imprisonment, they do not feel that they belong with the people now entering the church. Clifford speaks for Hepzibah when he associates them with the past by calling them ghosts, who "have no right among human beings--no right anywhere but in this old house, which has a curse on it, and which therefore, we are doomed to haunt!"[95] Second, when the two of them attempt to flee the past by running away from the old house, she feels that she is dreaming--that neither the Judge's death nor their departure can be real00because she is not used to adapting herself to quickly changing events. She feels that "Everything was unfixed from its agelong rest",[96] a feeling that her past-oriented mind cannot easily grasp. She still has a "fixed idea"[97] of the world, with Pyncheon Street at its centre; so, during the train ride, she cannot make the scenery seem real. Not until she returns to the old house does this feeling leave her. But once she re-enters the house, she not only discovers that reality returns, but also that she is not merely returning to the past and to the grip in which it had held her. Because Judge Pyncheon is now dead and Phoebe--the one person who is able to help Clifford rehabilitate himself--has returned, she is relieved of the "burden of responsibility"[98] for Clifford's welfare. Soon afterward, Hepzibah is able to leave the house and even to feel pity for Jaffrey. Because both the house and Jaffrey are emblematic of past injustices--the house of the injustice done to the Maules, Jaffrey of the one done to Clifford--these two occurrences represent the reduction of the past's importance in her life so that it now neither dominates nor determines the present. It is therefore fitting that at this point the ghost of Alice Pyncheon, which had haunted the house of the seven gables, should rise to heaven "after witnessing these deeds, this bygone woe and this present happiness".[99]

So far in this chapter, characters have been examined who are past-oriented for different reasons. Miriam, Zenobia and Hester attempt unsuccessfully to deny the past, Roderick Elliston is jealous, Holgrave is fascinated with his family's past, and Clifford and Hepzibah are restrictively burdened by the thirty year-old injustice of Clifford's imprisonment. The last two characters to be discussed, Dimmesdale and Reuben Bourne, are again different in that they are both obsessed by their feelings of guilt.

As a minister who has secretly committed adultery, Dimmesdale is constantly reminded of his guilt in the contradiction between what he is and what he preaches. This awareness of sin gnaws at him increasingly, until he cannot recover, despite his last-minute admission of guilt. Although he does not realize it at first, his salvation lies in revealing what he has done. Instead of doing so, however, he refuses to join Hester on the scaffold in front of the other settlers. As a result, his obsession with his guilt becomes so intense that his present life appears less real to him than does the past. He imagines, for example, figures from his past who point accusingly at his breast where the scarlet 'A' should be. These figures "were, in one sense, the truest and most substantial things which the poor minister now dealt with"[100] because his refusal to admit his guilt has taken "the pith and substance out of whatsoever realities"[101] surround him. In fact, "the whole universe is false"[102] to him, and insofar as he is not what he appears to be, the present is in effect reduced to "the shadow of a dream"[103] and he himself "becomes a shadow, or indeed, ceases to exist".[104]

Even the good he manages to do is not the result of his direct response to the needs of others, but is achieved by the action of his consuming guilt: "His intellectual gifts, his moral perceptions, his power of experiencing and communicating emotion, were kept in a state of preternatural activity by the prick and anguish of his [guilty] daily life".[105] Those who benefit from his sermons are deceived by him; they think that he is "a miracle of holiness",[106] whereas his statements and actions merely express the guilty agony he feels within himself.

This is not to say that Dimmesdale's actions and speeches are worthless to others. They strike a familiar chord in sinners' hearts precisely because they proceed from a fellow sinner's experience. And it is this fact that provides an early clue to the true path of Dimmesdale's salvation. He has acquired the ability "to express the highest truths through the humblest medium of familiar words and images"[107] because he is sinful. It is his adultery that has provided him with a power that other, less sinful, preachers do not have. For him to insist on attaining the "high mountain-peaks of faith and sanctity"[108] by denying his sin is therefore misguided effort. In fact, his most effective speech is given only after he has apparently decided to reveal his guilt which suggests that his torment results from not accepting and learning from his sin. Instead, he refuses to admit it, and thereby remains self-consciously tormented.

Dimmesdale's self-flagellations, his fasts and his vigils are graphic illustrations of the consequences of being past-oriented. Yet in the case of fasting, Dimmesdale is criticized not so much for the act as for his reasons for it. Whereas "many pious Puritans"[109] have fasted in order to make their bodies more fit to receive the word of god (a forward-looking, hopeful action), Dimmesdale does it merely "as an act of penance".[110] His reasons for flogging himself and for keeping vigils are likewise the result of his obsession with his past actions. So he "typified the constsnt introspection wherewith he tortured, but could not purify, himself".[111]

It is only after he realizes that trying to escape the past by fleeing the settlement is "deadly sin",[112] that he is enabled to write his brilliant final sermon and to take Hester and Pearl to the top of the scaffold where Hester had stood with her baby seven years before. Once he acknowledges his past by declaring his guilt, his "burden was removed".[113] He is now finally able to assume, at least for a few moments before he dies, his proper role as father and husband. But because he has waited too long, death overcomes him just as he becomes able to act without feeling oppressed by "the everactive tooth of remorse".[114]

Reuben Bourne is the other major character who becomes past-burdened by becoming guilty. He is one of the most important characters in terms of the argument presented here because he exemplifies so completely the position of the past-dominated character, and because the tale shows so precisely that Reuben's troubles end when the past no longer burdens him excessively. He will therefore be dealt with in detail here. In his case, the past becomes a dominant force after he leaves Roger Malvin to die in the wilderness. As Reuben progressively feels more guilt, he pays less and less attention to his present actions. One result of this inattention is the tragic death of his son, despite which he is finally able to rid himself of his feelings of guilt. The lesson that Hawthorne presents in this tale is that man must not become abstracted from the present.

There are three sources for Reuben's feelings of guilt: his motives at his departure from Malvin; his failure to correct Dorcas' misconceptions about her father's death; and his failure to redeem his vow. Although a fourth possibility is sometimes suggested, which is that Reuben feels guilt because of his act of leaving the dying Malvin, Hawthorne seems to exonerate him for it by suggesting in the departure scene that for Reuben to stay would have been futile: " ... and who shall impute blame to him if he shrink from so useless a sacrifice?"[115]

Later, Hawthorne adds that although Reuben does feel guilt, he "felt that for leaving Roger Malvin he deserved no censure".[116] In other words, he is able to justify his actions logically, but he cannot do so on an emotional level.

Hawthorne divides the story into three sections (plus one prefatory section): the scene of Reuben's departure from Malvin; the scenes that occur in the settlement; and those that depict the family's departure from the settlement and their return to the location of the first scene. In each of these sections Hawthorne presents one or more aspects of Reuben's feelings, the sources of which are complex and the effects of which become more intense as he recognizes more reasons why he should feel guilty. In the first scene, Hawthorne shows the initiation of guilty feelings in Reuben's uncertainty about his motives for leaving and also in his vow to return either to aid or bury Malvin. In the settlement scenes Hawthorne shows that Reuben's feelings are intensified by having him fail to reveal the truth about Malvin's death to Dorcas, and by showing that his knowledge of his unkept vow bothers him increasingly. In the last section Hawthorne portrays Reuben as being so guilt-ridden that he can scarcely function at all, either in guiding his family toward their new home or in hunting for their food. However, once Reuben returns to the place where he left Malvin, where he can vindicate his motives and discharge his vow, and once he reveals the truth to Dorcas, he rids himself of the past's oppressiveness.

In the initial section, Reuben's "distrust of his own motives"[117] first arises when he realizes that two of his motives are "the desire of existence and the hope of happiness".[118] This awareness is the first indication that he will later become preoccupied with this event in a way that will interfere with his subsequent actions. Even in this scene Hawthorne indicates that Reuben is already becoming preoccupied by showing him driven back for a last look at the dying Malvin. Having made the decision to leave partly because of the "thought that Malvin's life might be preserved"[119] Reuben should logically be striving to reach the settlements in the hope, however remote, of sending aid for Malvin. Instead, he gives in to "a sort of guilty feeling"[120] that impels him to go back to view the man he has just left. Although his realization of guilty motivation is only minutes old, Reuben's consciousness is already gripped by it to the extent that he sacrifices present necessity to his fascination with his ambivalent reasons for leaving.

Hawthorne further establishes that Reuben's past-orientation develops from this time by associating him with the oak sapling. He mentions that both the sapling and the man are young, and that neither has reached full maturity; then he shows that destructive restrictions are applied simultaneously to both of them by having Reuben take his vow at the same time that he ties his handkerchief to the tree. From this time forward, the development of both tree and man will be respectively restricted by physical and spiritual impediments.

The effect on Reuben of his unredeemed vow increases after he reaches the settlement, and continues to do so as long as he fails to honour his promise. More immediately, however, his feelings are intensified when he fails to tell Dorcas--his fiancee and the daughter of Malvin--the truth about his departure from her father. His first reaction to her questions about her father is to escape: "His first impulse was to cover his face".[121] When he tries to tell her, he finds that he cannot. Instead, he "shrank as with a bitter pain, and the blood gushed vividly into his wan and hollow cheeks".[122] Once he does respond, his defensive answer gives away the fact that he feels guilty. At this point, his awareness of his selfish motives surges into his consciousness and he speaks "vehemently, defending himself against an imaginary accusation".[123] He then fails to correct her when she assumes that he had left her father only after having buried him. Reuben now feels the weight of the past doubly: as a result of his motives, and as a result of his failure to correct Dorcas' assumption that he had buried her father. "He regretted, deeply and bitterly, the moral cowardice that had restrained his words when he was about to disclose the truth to Dorcas".[124]

That the present is now much less compelling to Reuben than the past Hawthorne illustrates by using the image of the farm that Reuben inherits through Dorcas. Hawthorne contrasts the condition of the farm as Reuben eventually leaves it, to both its original condition when he begins farming, and to the condition of the other farms in the area. Both comparisons reveal that Reuben is "a neglectful husbandman",[125] a passive man who is not too interested in working his farm. When Reuben first takes over the farm it is "under older cultivation, larger, and better stocked than most of the frontier establishments".[126] Yet despite the fact that "discouragements to agriculture were greatly lessened by the cessation of the Indian war ... Reuben did not profit by the altered condition of the country".[127] Other farms become "annually more fruitful",[128] while his land, analagous to his own state of mind, deteriorates. The cause of his misfortune lies within Reuben, in his lack of attention to the needs of the present--he applies himself to farming only during "intervals of industrious attention".[129] He is constantly distracted from his farming by the fact that "he had a deep vow unredeemed".[130] This memory is "His one secret thought [that] became like a chain binding down his spirit and like a serpent gnawing into his heart".[131] Because his thoughts are consistently drawn to a particular event in his past, his life deteriorates: "the world did not go well with Reuben Bourne; and, though not till many years after his marriage, he was finally a ruined man".[132]

Even Hawthorne's description of Reuben's wedding reveals the effects of his guilty feelings on him. Although his bride's face is "covered with blushes",[133] his is "pale",[134] showing that he is not able to feel the natural joyfulness of his wedding day. The implication is obvious: Reuben is so preoccupied with feelings of guilt that he cannot enjoy his own wedding.

The longer he waits to redeem his vow, and the longer he puts off telling Dorcas the truth, the more guilty he feels and the less interested he is in the present. Hawthorne reveals this lack of interest by showing that Reuben is assaulted by recurring fantasies that consist of memories of the scene in which he had left Malvin. These fantasies cause him to experience "in no small degree the mental horrors which punish the perpetrators of undiscovered crime",[135] and thereby disrupt his life. One such fantasy is a "haunting and torturing fancy that his father-in-law was yet sitting at the foot of the rock ... awaiting his pledged assistance".[136] Another is that "an unburied corpse was calling to him out of the wilderness".[137]

Reuben's obsession with guilt is the "evil fate that had pursued him",[138] and it eventually ruins him. When the family leaves for their new home, Reuben is "misanthropic because unhappy".[139] His concern with the past fills the void which should more appropriately be filled by healthy relationships involving his family, his neighbours, nature, and god. These relationships have all deteriorated. He cannot love his family except as they reflect himself, and he has alienated his neighbours by his obnoxiousness. Nature will not yield him much because he does not focus much effort on farming, and most importantly, he cannot pray.

In the end, he cannot act effectively until he actually returns to the place where he first began to be influenced by feelings of guilt. The third section of the story takes place mainly in the vicinity of this original scene, and shows the way in which Reuben rids himself of his feelings of guilt and how he becomes primarily concerned with the present.

The trek westward shows that Reuben's compulsiveness concerning the past intensifies sharply after the family's departure from the settlements, and correspondingly that Reuben's ability to deal with the needs of the present is now seriously impaired. This is first shown by his failure to lead Dorcas and Cyrus to their new home. Instead of taking them in the proper direction, Reuben obeys his obsessive need to return to the place where he had left Malvin eighteen years ago. Earlier, in the settlement scenes, Reuben had "had a strange impression that, were he to make the trail, he would be led straight to Malvin's bones".[140] Now his premonition is realized. The course he follows leads more directly west than necessary to reach their homestead. But each time Cyrus attempts to redirect Reuben's course, "Reuben seemed ill at ease".[141] Despite Cyrus' suggestions, he always "resumed the old direction"[142] away from their new home and the present it represents, and continues toward the remembered scene from which his feelings of guilt had originally sprung.

To this point Hawthorne has recorded the downfall of a character obsessed by the past for which he feels guilt. Now he shows that Reuben's guilty feelings have completely engulfed him by surrounding him with tokens of decay and death.

The last few miles of their journey have been through a landscape much like "huge waves of a petrified sea",[143] an environment filled with reminders of decayed growth. Their campsite is littered with uprooted, rotting trees and withered leaves. The table for the evening meal is set on "the moss-covered trunk of a large fallen tree",[144] and the seats are to be "seats of mouldering wood".[145] Even the pines, which are still alive, are "dark and gloomy",[146] becoming bright only through the agency of firelight. They are in this way a corollary of Reuben's spirit that "shone at intervals with an outward gladness"[147] but which, inwardly, contains "a cold, cold sorrow".[148] The unburied corpse lies both in the midst of this mould and decay, and figuratively in the blighted breast of Reuben.

In this environment, both Reuben and Cyrus go hunting meat for their evening meal; however, their attitudes toward the hunt differ sharply. Whereas Cyrus' feelings are of anticipation, Reuben's thoughts are focussed on the past. He leaves the encampment muttering, "Where am I? Whither am I wandering? Where did I leave him?"[149] While his son, in going out to hunt, acts in response to the family's present necessity, food for their supper, Reuben fails to concern himself properly with either what he should, or is, now doing.

Because he is obsessed with feelings of guilt, Reuben's attempt at hunting is limited to a kind of somnambulistic and passive wandering in which "his steps were imperceptibly led ..."[150] He hunts only "instinctively",[151] his attention focussed not on what he is doing, but on the workings of his tormented mind. "He was musing on the strange influence that had led him away from his premeditated course, and so far into the depths of the wilderness".[152] Hunting deer hardly enters his mind, so he scarcely interrupts these past-oriented musings to shoot at "some object behind a thick veil of undergrowth".[153] As soon as he shoots, his attention is recaptured by the past. Only now he becomes aware of "recollections now breaking over him",[154] memories which include recognition of both the rock beneath which he had left Malvin, and the once-vigorous sapling that now stands the victim of a "blight".[155] Instead of making sure of the animal that he thinks he has just killed, Reuben contemplates the oak, symbolic of himself, and wonders, "Whose guilt had blasted it?"[156] In this recognition of the oak, the reader is presented with the results of the past's excessive influence on both the sapling and Reuben: the "topmost bough [is] withered, sapless and utterly dead",[157] while Reuben's mind shows little sign of healthy life.

Hawthorne now leaves Reuben briefly, and turns his attention to the scene of the family's encampment. By doing so, he is able to clarify Reuben's past-orientation by juxtaposing him to his wife. Dorcas, who lives properly oriented in the 'now' as had Cyrus, provides at once a dramatic delay of the climax and a symbolic counterpoint to the self-centered, guilty ponderings of her husband. She pays attention to their present need--their dinner, without either ignoring the past or brooding over it. She thinks of her acquaintances in the settlements, but justifies her present position by indicating that she would rather be with the ones she loves than be a lonely face in a crowd of people. Unlike her husband, she does not allow the past to intrude excessively on her thoughts, but she peruses "the current year's Massachusetts Almanac"[158] while she is cooking. Like Rosina of "Egotism", she shows that she considers the importance of the past to be merely "like an anecdote in our Eternity".[159]

After Dorcas hears the gunshot, she leaves the campsite in search of her son who she hopes has slain a deer. When she arrives where Reuben is standing, he has already discovered that he has killed his son. Yet he cannot give vent to his feelings of "strong despair".[160] At this point, Hawthorne gives no indication that Reuben feels relief, a fact which mitigates against interpretations that would make Cyrus' death a form of ritual sacrifice. Instead, it is only after he has completely rid his life of the destructive influence of the past by confessing the truth to Dorcas that he is able to respond to the death of his son by crying and praying. The withered bough of the oak falls after he admits to Dorcas that "This broad rock is the gravestone of your near kindred, Dorcas ... Your tears will fall at once on your father and your son".[161] The branch, symbolic of Reuben's spirit, had not fallen at the death of Cyrus because the shooting has no direct bearing on Reuben's past-burdened condition.

A number of critics have claimed that Cyrus' death is part of Reuben's atonement, and is therefore deliberate. It is my opinion that such a reading does not give Hawthorne enough credit, because, as I have shown, he does provide a complete rationale for the story's events without the killing being necessarily premeditated. Besides, postulating that the killing is deliberate poses the thorny question of Reuben's atonement for this new crime, a question that raises serious and unnecessary doubts about the unity of the plot, considering the careful pattern of increasing and guilty obsession with past events that Hawthorne has established in Reuben.

It is more logical to consider that Hawthorne ends his tale with the relief of Reuben's obsession and with his return to meaningful involvement in the present, symbolized by his final act, prayer.

Like most of the other characters in this chapter, Reuben Bourne has been afflicted by his sense of the past, and has recovered when he achieves an awareness in which the past does not dominate his life. All these characters are distinct from each other, although, as has been shown, they have this characteristic awareness of the past in common. Their fates correspond with their final orientation toward the past and the present: most recover a proper awareness in which they concern themselves principally with the present, and thereby achieve a measure of peace (like Reuben, Hester, and Miriam), while some attain happiness (like Holgrave, Clifford and Hepzibah); a few either recover too late to save themselves from tragedy (as in Dimmesdale's case), or not at all (as in Zenobia's). However, they all illustrate the ill effects of not maintaining an appropriate involvement in the present when they become guilty, obsessed, jealous or suffer from an injustice over a long period of time.

NOTES

[1] Nathaniel Hawthorne, _The Blithedale Romance_, p. 16. Subsequently referred to as _B.R._

[2] _B.R._, p. 45

[3] _B.R._, p. 155

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne, _The Scarlet Letter_, p. 185. Subsequently referred to as _S.L._

[5] _S.L._, p. 195

[6] _S.L._, p. 191

[7] _S.L._, p. 193

[8] _S.L._, p. 204

[9] _S.L._, p. 188

[10] _S.L._, p. 81

[11] _S.L._, p. 192

[12] _S.L._, p. 158

[13] _S.L._, p. 158

[14] _S.L._, p. 235

[15] _S.L._, p. 162

[16] _S.L._, p. 253

[17] _S.L._, p. 253

[18] _S.L._, p. 252

[19] _S.L._, p. 253

[20] S.L., p. 253

[21] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Marble Faun, p. 15. Subsequently referred to as M.F.

[22] M.F., p. 18

[23] M.F., p. 77

[24] M.F., p. 317

[25] M.F., p. 84

[26] M.F., p. 105

[27] M.F., p. 122

[28] M.F., p. 138

[29] M.F., p. 59

[30] M.F., p. 82

[31] M.F., p. 82

[32] M.F., p. 82

[33] M.F., p. 114

[34] M.F., p. 114

[35] M.F., p. 193

[36] M.F., p. 132

[37] M.F., p. 9-10

[38] M.F., p. 193

[39] M.F., p. 193

[40] M.F., p. 195

[41] Hyatt Waggoner - Nathaniel Hawthorne: Selected Tales and Sketches, Toronto, Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1964, p. 190. Subsequently referred to as Waggoner.

[41] Waggoner, p. 190

[42] Waggoner, p. 201

[43] Waggoner, p. 200

[44] Waggoner, p. 202

[45] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The House of the Seven Gables, vii. Subsequently referred to as H.S.G.

[46] H.S.G., p. 42

[47] H.S.G., p. 162

[48] H.S.G., p. 162

[49] H.S.G., p. 163

[50] H.S.G., p. 191

[51] H.S.G., p. 159

[52] H.S.G., p. 189

[53] H.S.G., p. 189

[54] H.S.G., p. 188

[55] H.S.G., p. 263

[56] H.S.G., p. 262

[57] H.S.G., p. 274

[58] H.S.G., p. 138

[59] H.S.G., p. 138

[60] H.S.G., p. 65

[61] H.S.G., p. 94

[62] H.S.G., p. 96

[63] H.S.G., p. 96

[64] H.S.G., p. 143

[65] H.S.G., p. 143

[66] H.S.G., p. 143

[67] H.S.G., p. 143

[68] H.S.G., p. 133-4

[69] H.S.G., p. 132

[70] H.S.G., p. 220

[71] H.S.G., p. 227

[72] H.S.G., p. 221-222

[73] H.S.G., p. 229

[74] H.S.G., p. 268

[75] H.S.G., p. 272

[76] H.S.G., p. 273

[77] H.S.G., p. 273

[78] H.S.G., p. 123

[79] H.S.G., p. 45

[80] H.S.G., p. 53

[81] H.S.G., p. 44

[82] *H.S.G.*, p. 51

[83] *H.S.G.*, p. 52

[84] *H.S.G.*, p. 52

[85] *H.S.G.*, p. 65

[86] *H.S.G.*, p. 76

[87] *H.S.G.*, p. 76

[88] *H.S.G.*, p. 72

[89] *H.S.G.*, p. 76

[90] *H.S.G.*, p. 76

[91] *H.S.G.*, p. 75

[92] *H.S.G.*, p. 75

[93] *H.S.G.*, p. 211

[94] *H.S.G.*, p. 211

[95] *H.S.G.*, p. 150-151

[96] *H.S.G.*, p. 113

[97] *H.S.G.*, p. 114

[98] *H.S.G.*, p. 268

[99] *H.S.G.*, p. 277

[100] *S.L.* p. 140

[101] *S.L.*, p. 140

[102] *S.L.*, p. 140

[103] *S.L.*, p. 140

[104] *S.L.*, p. 141

[105] *S.L.*, p. 140

[106] *S.L.*, p. 135

[107] *S.L.*, p. 137

[108] *S.L.*, p. 136

[109] *S.L.*, p. 136

[110] *S.L.*, p. 139

[111] *S.L.*, p. 139

[112] *S.L.*, p. 139

[113] *S.L.*, p. 214

[114] *S.L.*, p. 246

[115] *S.L.*, p. 248

[116] Waggoner, p. 42

[117] Waggoner, p. 44

[118] Waggoner, p. 39

[119] Waggoner, p. 41

[120] Waggoner, p. 38

[121] Waggoner, p. 41

[122] Waggoner, p. 43

[123] Waggoner, p. 43

[124] Waggoner, p. 43

[125] Waggoner, p. 44

[126] Waggoner, p. 46

[127] Waggoner, p. 45

[128] Waggoner, p. 46

[129] Waggoner, p. 46

[130] Waggoner, p. 46

[131] Waggoner, p. 45

[132] Waggoner, p. 45

[133] Waggoner, p. 46

[134] Waggoner, p. 44

[135] Waggoner, p. 44

[136] Waggoner, p. 45

[137] Waggoner, p. 45

[138] Waggoner, p. 45

[139] Waggoner, p. 45

[140] Waggoner, p. 46

[141] Waggoner, p. 45

[142] Waggoner, p. 48-49

[143] Waggoner, p. 49

[144] Waggoner, p. 49

[145] Waggoner, p. 52

[146] Waggoner, p. 52

[147] Waggoner, p. 49

[148] Waggoner, p. 48

[149] Wattoner, p. 48

[150] Waggoner, p. 50

[151] Waggoner, p. 50

[152] Waggoner, p. 50

[153] Waggoner, p. 51

[154] Waggoner, p. 51

[155] Waggoner, p. 51

[156] Waggoner, p. 52

[157] Waggoner, p. 52

[158] Waggoner, p. 52

[159] Waggoner, p. 49

[160] Waggoner, p. 202

[161] Waggoner, p. 54

[162] Waggoner, p. 54

[163] For examples of positions like this, see: Agnes McNeill Donohue, "'From Whose Bourne No Traveller Returns': A Reading of Roger Malvin's Burial,'", Nineteenth Century Fiction; Gloria Chasson Erlich, "Guilt and Expiation in 'Roger Malvin's Burial,'" PMLA.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

It has been the purpose of this paper to show that the various fates of thirty-two of Hawthorne's characters are determined by their attitude toward, and awareness of, past and present events. Three distinct groups of characters have been identified, each with its characteristic orientation and fate. First, characters who are, or who become, properly aware of both the past and present have been shown to be peaceful, and in a few cases, to be happy. Adam and Eve, for example, do not become lost in reflections on the past, although they dimly recall it, but dedicate themselves instead to creating a new life. As well, characters like Donatello and Holgrave, by attaining a proper awareness of both the past and the present, achieve at least the peacefulness of a quiet conscience (in Donatello's case) and even happiness (as Holgrave does). Second, characters who are too exclusively concerned with the present, and who ignore the past, usually become victims like Georgiana and Beatrice, or retreat into positions where they remain incomplete or neutered beings, like Hilda and Kenyon. The third group consists of those in whom Hawthorne is most interested, and to whom approximately half of this essay is dedicated. They are all burdened in some way by their awareness of the past: nine of them become excessively dedicated to fixed projects, while others are variously oppressed by previous events in which they have either had a part themselves or in which some other member of their families have been involved. The fates of these characters, at least those who remain too concerned with the past, is either to die or to cause the death of someone close to them (always a female). Those who die are Digby, Ethan Brand, Chillingworth and Zenobia; those who cause the death of a woman are: Hollingsworth, Aylmer and Rappaccini (together with Baglioni and Giovanni). On the other hand, those who do achieve a proper awareness become characteristically happy or peaceful, like Donatello, Roderick Elliston and Holgrave.

The existence of these three groups, and the corresponding fates that Hawthorne assigns to the characters in each, reveal much about him and his work. In the first place, the nature of Hawthorne's concept of reality becomes clearer. This in turn helps to place him in the context of the contemporaneous discussion surrounding the place of the European past in the American present, which involved, for Hawthorne, the doctrine of felix culpa. Last, his use of this doctrine reveals the reason for the failure of The Marble Faun.

For Hawthorne reality consists of both the expending, democratic evanescence of the present, and of the constant, established stability of the past. On one hand, his characters must avoid the easy temptation of ignoring the past and the lessons it teaches. On the other, they must avoid losing their proper place in the present by becoming preoccupied with, or obsessed by, their past experience. Therefore, characters whose vision is too narrowly focussed on the hopeful present are as likely to come to an unfortunate or unhappy end as characters who are obsessed by memories of the past are likely to cause destruction. For example, Beatrice's failure to keep in mind the significance of her past leads her to believe mistakenly that she can secure Giovanni's affection even temporarily. As well, Georgiana's decision to trust her husband, despite that most of his previous experiments have been failures, contributes to her untimely death. In each of these two cases, the present-oriented female is inadvertently destroyed by a male who has become obsessed by a fixed project. The fact that past-oriented characters like Rappaccini and Aylmer are the active agents in the downfall of present-oriented ones supports the critical view that in Hawthorne's fictional world the place of evil is the past. Yet, the fact that characters who do not allow the past its proper influence are made to suffer at the hands of those characters, shows that Hawthorne realizes the limitations of innocence. For him, the experience of the past is necessary in order that wisdom can be imparted to the hopeful present.

The fact that Hawthorne perceives healthy human existence to consist of both continuous development in the ongoing now and the experience provided by the past, establishes his position among his contemporaries. The major literary discussion during Hawthorne's writing life dealt with the place of the past in the present. R.W.B. Lewis has helpfully defined the two opposing parties in this debate to be the "party of Hope and the party of Memory".[1] In the first and dominant group, Lewis includes most of the major figures of early nineteenth century American letters: Jefferson, Thoreau, Dewey, Emerson, Holmes, Whitman (whom Lewis terms "this Adam") and Cooper. The party of

Memory includes theologians and clerics like Nathaniel Taylor who claims that the present is merely an extension of the corrupted past. However, neither of these extreme positions characterizes Hawthorne adequately. He belongs more to the "party of Irony",[2] as does the elder Henry James, whom Lewis characterizes by "a sense of the tragic collisions to which innocence was liable (something unthinkable among the hopeful), and equally by an awareness of the heightened perception and humanity which suffering made possible (something unthinkable among the nostalgic)".[3]

Hawthorne's position is one in which both "hope" and "memory" play a significant and necessary part. The happiness that Hawthorne envisages for man is neither the unalloyed joy of Whitman and Thoreau that results from having shuffled off responsibility for the sinful past, nor the reserved solemnity of Edwards that consists of atonement for previous errors. Richard Fogle is correct in emphasizing the patterns of light and dark in Hawthorne, because Hawthorne's idea of happiness is consistently one in which both joy and sadness are joined. For example, Dimmesdale's sense of sin--that has crushed him down--is replaced by one of peace, even though he is dying, when he recovers his proper place in the present by admitting that he is Hester's lover. Despite his various tribulations, Reuben Bourne recovers his ability to pray and is relieved of his debilitating sense of guilt when he returns to bury Malvin and tells Dorcas the truth. Roderick Elliston recovers his wife's love after much suffering when he rids himself of his compulsive sense of jealousy, and Owen Warland succeeds by allowing his rigid concepts to evolve with his increased knowledge. Hester achieves an exalted position in the settlement after she accepts her sinfulness and involves herself wholeheartedly in the community; similarly, Miriam is able to rid herself of the torment caused by her previous life when she achieves the love of Donatello. Finally, Holgrave, Hepzibah and Clifford all find happiness when the past, represented by Maule's curse, no longer oppresses their present lives.

Some of these same tales indicate not only that man can achieve happiness (or contentment) after having sinned, but that the happiness he attains is superior for having sinned. It is in these works, some of which are noted below, that Hawthorne reveals the importance to him of the doctrine of the fortunate fall. In The Scarlet Letter, Hester's final position--after she dedicates herself to the welfare of the community--is one in which she no longer regards herself as above the rules of society, but accepts the justice of the judgment made about her. In "Roger Malvin's Burial", Reuben learns (at great cost) the error of not atoning for what he considers to be sin. Although in The House of the Seven Gables neither Holgrave, nor Clifford nor Hepzibah sin, they all earn a better life after having suffered the effects of others' sin. Holgrave loses his narrow idealism after he refuses to repeat his ancestor's crime of enslaving another's soul, and so is able to become a loving man.

Both Clifford and Hepzibah leave their gloomy, lonely life in the old house for a more cheerful existence elsewhere in the agreeable company of their three friends. More than in any of the above, the centrality of the fortunate fall is most obviously presented in The Marble Faun. In this novel, Donatello is presented initially as the new, unfallen Adam, whose innocence is incompletely human: he is ignorant of the past, he has few social graces and appears to be almost simple. Hawthorne says of him that "his character needed the dark element, which it found in [Miriam]".[4] However, Donatello falls, losing his innocence as he does so, but gaining "an inestimable treasure of improvement won from an experience of pain".[5]

Yet this clearest statement that the Fall was fortunate reveals Hawthorne's ultimate inability to espouse it fully. At the close of the novel, Hawthorne draws back from what he has already established in the character of Donatello. While Donatello achieves full humanity through sin, and although he acts positively and bravely in returning to Rome, Hawthorne leaves him in an Italian prison, from which he may never be freed. Contrarily, Kenyon is allowed to leave Italy with Hilda, despite the fact that he fails to decide for himself whether sin, "like sorrow, [is] merely an element of human education, through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could otherwise have attained".[6] Unlike Donatello, Kenyon retreats from his position when he discovers that by persisting he will alienate Hilda. Instead, he asks her forgiveness for his statement, claims that he "never did believe it"[7] and then begs her to direct him through the moral maze in which he finds himself: "Were you to be my guide ... all would go well. Oh, Hilda, guide me home!"[8]

The resulting dissonance between Donatello's and Kenyon's final positions and the apparent reversal of Hawthorne's view of Donatello's development through sin, effectively destroy the novel's resolution and its unity. The central figure is elevated systematically throughout the novel, only to be pulled down without adequate reason at the end, while the supporting character who remains undeveloped until the conclusion is suddenly expected to replace the hero in the reader's sympathy. This belated manipulation of the plot leaves the reader wondering why Hawthorne has taken so much trouble establishing Donatello's improvement, and why Kenyon has not been more central to the action until the end.

Because The Marble Faun is Hawthorne's last complete work, one wonders to what extent Hawthorne had really accepted the doctrine of the fortunate fall. The novel certainly does not suggest his unequivocal acceptance of it. However, one can be certain of his conviction that the past is necessarily a part of human life. The fact that he repeatedly writes about characters who reach unfortunate ends by being exclusively concerned with either the past or the present shows that Hawthorne is critical of both the party of Hope and the party of Memory. The fact that the fates of other characters who achieve an awareness of both the past and the present are positive demonstrates his feeling that, while man's principal concern must always be the "impalpable Now",[9] he must forever remain aware of the "dark necessity"[10] implied by the past.

NOTES

[1] R.V.B. Lewis, _The American Adam_, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955, p. 7. Subsequently referred to as Lewis.

[2] Lewis, p. 7

[3] Lewis, p. 8

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne, _The Marble Faun_, p. 295. Subsequently referred to as _M.F._

[5] M.F., p. 312

[6] M.F., p. 313

[7] M.F., p. 313

[8] Nathaniel Hawthorne, _The House of the Seven Gables_, p. 134.

[9] Nathaniel Hawthorne, _The Scarlet Letter_, p. 168.

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